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

TENTH ASSEMBLY

Ministerial Statement

Report No. 3 of the HCW Committee - Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-22 - Update on Recommendation 11 - Development of a Disability Health Strategy

**Presented by
Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Health
24 November 2022**

Madam Speaker, I rise today to give an update on the development of the ACT Disability Health Strategy in response to Recommendation 11 from Report No. 3 of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing - Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-22.

In the lead-up to the 2020 election, the Government committed to developing and implementing a Disability Health Strategy – something that remains a priority for me in the health portfolio.

Development of the Disability Health Strategy is progressing with the ACT Health Directorate commencing work in 2021 in collaboration with Community Services Directorate.

Phase One, the scoping of the Disability Health Strategy Project, was completed in December 2021 and delivered:

- a scoping paper, *Future Directions of Disability Health in the ACT: Phase One of the ACT Disability Health Strategy Project*, and
- a listening report, *ACT Disability Health Strategy Roundtable: Listening Report – Phase One of the of the ACT Disability Health Strategy Project*.

Phase Two, the development of the Disability Health Strategy, commenced in January 2022 and at its conclusion will deliver a Disability Health Strategy and first Action Plan.

Phase Three, the launch and implementation of the strategy, will commence in 2023 and will deliver a 10-year ACT Disability Health Strategy and its First Action Plan in multiple mediums, including Easy English; and will include planning, Budget submissions and implementation of seed projects.

Madam Speaker, the Disability Health Strategy will be informed by the detailed work, consultation and engagement undertaken by the community and ACT Government over the past few years – we don't want to, nor do we need to re-invent the wheel, when so much good work has gone before.

The Strategy will build on this work including the Phase One Scoping Paper and Listening Report, national and ACT policy and research recommendations, the ACT Council of Social Service 2019 report *Imagining Better – Reflections on access, choice and control in ACT health services for people with disability* and Women's Health Matters 2022 report "*I have to ask to be included...*" to deliver – with the disability

community – an ambitious strategy with a vision for a better, more accessible, more equitable health system.

To lead Phase Two, the Disability Health Strategy Steering Committee was formed to ensure we developed the strategy with rather than for the community. The Committee is co-chaired by Dougie Herd – a highly regarded disability activist and former Chair of the ACT Disability Reference Group.

There are 24 members of the Committee, which includes:

- community representatives, who are people with lived experience of disability and/or carers of people with disability that actively applied to participate and contribute to the development of the Strategy;
- community disability service providers or advocacy groups; and
- ACT Government representatives from across ACT public health services and Government.

To ensure that the Committee is supported to deliver this significant system reform project, the ACT Government invested \$260,000 through the 2022-23 Budget into the work to finalise the Strategy.

Since the Steering Committee first met on 28 April this year, it has been busy working to develop the vision and priorities for the strategy.

I am pleased to report that at its most recent meeting on 10 November, the Committee resolved the clear direction for development of the Strategy, following consultation with the ACT Disability Reference Group.

As members may be aware there is a lot of activity in this policy space.

On 3 December 2021, *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031* was launched.

This strategy has seven Outcome Areas:

- Employment and Financial Security,
- Inclusive Homes and Communities,
- Safety, Rights and Justice,
- Personal and Community Support,
- Education and Learning,
- Health and Wellbeing, and

- Community Attitudes.

In response to the national strategy, the ACT Office for Disability is developing an overarching 10-year ACT Disability Strategy.

The whole-of-government ACT Disability Strategy and the Disability Health Strategy are interlinked, with both launching in 2023.

Minister Davidson, responsible for the Disability Strategy, and I are working closely together to ensure alignment and avoid duplication across the development process to ultimately deliver better outcomes for Canberrans living with disability. We are both acutely aware of how much trust has been put in us by the community and how important both pieces of work are.

Also closely linked is the Canberra Health Services (CHS) Disability Action and Inclusion Plan, which will be launched at the end of this month, in the lead-up to the International Day of People with Disability, or I-Day, on 3 December. As the largest provider of ACT Government funded health services and the only provider of many specialist services, CHS has a key role to play in delivering a more inclusive health system. The process of developing the Disability Action and Inclusion Plan has been an important one but has also highlighted how much more there is to do.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the Government's commitment to developing and implementing a Disability Health Strategy to improve health outcomes for people with disability.

I would also like to thank the members of the Disability Health Strategy Steering Committee and the ACT disability community for their continued support and engagement in the development of the Disability Health Strategy.

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