



## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

### **Inquiry into Appropriation 2022-2022 (No 2) and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) 2022-2022 (No 2)**

#### **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Mrs. Elizabeth Kikkert MLA to ask the Treasurer

Ref: 2022-23 Budget Review, pp 36-37, 45, 54, 59

In relation to: 2022-23 Budget Review: out-of-home care (OOHC)

1. Can the treasurer please provide a detailed breakdown of the \$19 million in additional funding for OOHC in the Budget Review?
2. Can the treasurer please quantify and explain the 'increased demand for out-of-home care services' linked in the Budget Review to the \$19 million in additional funding? For example, has there been a surge in children and young people in need of OOHC, and if so, what is the size of this surge, and what (if known) are the presumed reasons for it?
3. Is the \$4.467 million in additional funding to acquire larger properties for therapeutic residential care part of the \$19 million addressed in questions 1–2, or is it a separate expense?
4. Are the 'three larger properties for therapeutic residential care' similar in design and scope to the residential care home run by MacKillop Family Services in Royalla, NSW?
5. Will the three houses in question 4 be intensive therapeutic care homes, intensive transitional therapeutic care homes, or a mixture of the two?
6. How many residential care homes currently operate in the ACT, and how many residential care homes will operate in the ACT when the three new homes in question 4 are fully operational? (Is it the plan, for example, to cease operating any existing residential care homes?)
7. What is the planned residential capacity of each of the three new homes in question 4?
8. Has a contract been awarded to a new residential care provider? If so, when, to whom, for how long, and at what total cost?
9. When is the current service contract with ACT Together due to end, and when will successful tenderer/s be announced?
10. Is the one-off funding of \$449,000 for an indemnity scheme for OOHC providers a short-term gap measure until a long-term measure is in place, or is this funding part of developing a long-term indemnity scheme?
11. What is the current state of indemnity against accusations of abuse for OOHC providers in the ACT?

Mr Andrew Barr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The additional funding in the Budget Review is to assist in meeting higher contractual costs for the provision of out of home care services by the current provider. The funding will also assist with meeting increased demand in 2022-23, as well as the contractual and transition costs for the new provider of residential care following 31 March 2023.
2. The reference to 'increased demand for out-of-home care' relates to the contractual costs discussed above and demand for out of home care services which has increased slightly due to some growth in the number of children and young people in care, the provision of services to an increased number of young people who are over 18 years of age, and longer than projected stays in out of home care.
3. The \$4.467 million in additional funding to acquire larger properties for therapeutic residential care is a separate expense.
4. The residential care home in Royalla NSW run by MacKillop Family Services provides Intensive Therapeutic Care in accordance with the NSW Government's Department of Communities and Justice, Out of Home Care and Permanency Support Program. The three larger properties will be used to deliver culturally safe, trauma aware, healing informed residential and intensive residential care services within a therapeutic environment to meet the needs of up to four young people per house living in residential care in the ACT.
5. The NSW Government's Out of Home Care and Permanency Support Program uses a mix of intensive therapeutic care homes and intensive transitional therapeutic care homes to cater for a substantially larger cohort of children and young people when compared to the ACT. The ACT will not be delivering using the NSW models and have contracted for a bespoke arrangement to meet the needs of young people in the ACT.
6. The number of, and demand for, residential care homes shift according to the number of young people requiring a residential care placement and their changing circumstances. There are currently approximately 30 homes used for a range of out of home care purposes including residential care. Detailed planning is currently underway on the implementation of the three larger properties.
7. The three larger properties will accommodate up to 12 young people living in therapeutic residential care.
8. A contract with a new residential care provider will be executed on or before 31 March 2023.
9. ACT Together will cease the delivery of residential care services on 31 March 2023. The new provider of residential care will be announced following the execution of a contract. Preparation for transition of services is currently underway to ensure continuity and certainty for young people and staff as far as possible.
10. This funding is to support resourcing to undertake analysis, design and implementation of a new indemnity scheme to cover out of home care service providers for physical and sexual abuse claims, with consideration to both short- and longer-term arrangements.
11. Outside of the proposed scheme, the ACT Government has not extended indemnity for physical and sexual abuse claims to out of home care providers in the ACT. Contracted providers have been required to obtain public liability insurance through commercial arrangements.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Signature: 

Date: 17. 3.23

By the Treasurer, Mr Andrew Barr MLA