



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nichole Lawder MLA (Chair) Ms Suzane Orr MLA (Deputy Chair) Miss
Laura Nuttall MLA (Member)

Appropriation Bill 2024-2025 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative
Assembly) Bill 2024-2025

Question on Notice (Committee)

Asked by: Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Community Services, Seniors and Veterans

Redirection: Canberra Health Services

Reference: Budget paper G page 13

Date: 24 July 2024

In relation to: ACAT Assessments

Question Lodgement Date: 26 July 2024

Date Answer Due: 05 August 2024

Question

- 1) In February in the Senate, it was reported that the average wait time for an aged care assessment in the ACT was 55.4 days, significantly higher than the national average of 35.6 days. What funding does the ACT government receive to conduct aged care assessments for the Federal Government?
- 2) Why is the average wait time for aged care assessments in the ACT so much longer than the national average?
- 3) What have you done to ensure older Canberrans are not put at risk because of these wait times?

MINISTER STEPHEN-SMITH: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

- 1) In 2023-24, the ACT Government received \$1,634,433 under the Commonwealth Government's Aged Care Assessment Program to deliver comprehensive aged care assessments in the ACT. This funding provides 12.5 FTE for the ACT Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT), of which 8.34 FTE are assessors undertaking comprehensive assessments. The remaining FTE includes an ACAT manager (non-assessor), delegate (non-assessor – delegation and assessment are required to be undertaken by separate clinicians to ensure independence of decision making), team leader (non-assessor) and administration support.

- 2) The ACT is serviced by one ACAT service to deliver comprehensive assessments to six hospitals and the community. The team consists of experienced ACAT nursing and allied health professional staff who complete comprehensive assessments and support plan reviews of older clients who seek to access Commonwealth funded aged care supports.

There has been a significant increase in assessment referral volume to the ACT ACAT over recent years. As an example, approximately 4,389 referrals were received in 2022-23, compared with 2,999 in 2017-18. This increasing demand is beyond the capacity of the Commonwealth funded assessor team, which has led to a significant increase in the waitlist for low-priority comprehensive assessments.

ACT ACAT has made annual requests to the Commonwealth over recent years for additional funding for more ACAT assessors to remedy the increasing waitlist. No additional funding has been provided to the ACT Government.

- 3) The ACT ACAT prioritises all referrals and applies the Commonwealth's priority rating to the timing of each assessment (i.e., high-priority, medium-priority, low-priority). The urgency of the assessment is based on client's level of function, the risk in relation to the care situation, and any other relevant concerns.

ACT ACAT has met the Commonwealth's KPI that 90% of all assessments in community are completed within the allocated priority timeframes for high-priority and medium-priority clients.

ACT ACAT has recruited an additional temporary surge workforce to assist in reducing the wait times. Further, the ACT ACAT has a strong relationship with six ACT public and private hospitals, aged care service providers and residential aged care facilities, where ACT ACAT works with these services to assess identified clients early to ensure clients are not placed at risk.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature:



Date:

8 / 8 / 24

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith