



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Mental Health

Reference: Mental Health

Hearing: 11 February 2025

In relation to: Safe Haven Garran

Question received: 19 February 2025

Answer Due: 26 February 2025

During last year's annual reports, we heard that the Safe Haven at Garran would be complete by August 2025.

- 1) During the hearings, the evidence suggested that there would be a delay in the opening date. What is the current scheduled opening date?
- 2) What evaluations have been completed on the efficacy of the Safe Haven in Belconnen?
- 3) During the hearings, Minister Stephen-Smith suggested that there was not currently a strong evidence base for the Safe Haven Model, what modelling has the ACT Government conducted to support this?
- 4) When will the ACT Government make a decision about when they will open the Safe Haven in Garran?

MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1) As discussed in the 11 February 2025 hearing of the Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023-24, the delivery of the Safe Haven at Canberra Hospital is on hold while options to sustainably deliver the Safe Haven in Belconnen are under consideration. The Safe Haven in Belconnen does not currently have funding in place beyond 30 June 2026, as such the work to establish a Canberra Hospital Safe Haven is under consideration while advice on options is being brought together by the ACT Health Directorate.

2) A formal evaluation of the Safe Haven in Belconnen has not been commissioned to date, however the ACT Government receives regular performance reporting from this service. These performance reports have highlighted high satisfaction rates for guests, with 88 per cent of guests reporting a positive experience using the service, and an average reduction of 24 per cent in the Subjective Units of Distress Scale scores between the guest's arrival and departure.

While the ACT Government has not completed any formal evaluations on the Safe Haven in Belconnen, the ACT has been participating in the ANU-led national research project, Co-Creating Safe Spaces project. This research partnership includes six different safe spaces sites across New South Wales and the ACT, including the Belconnen Safe Haven, and aims to:

- Find out if safe spaces work for people in distress and/or suicidal crisis.
- Work with safe space guests, peer workers and communities on how to measure what safe spaces do for people, and for the mental health system.
- Explore safe space co-design processes and how models are put into practice.
- Look at the future of safe spaces as a key part of the mental health system.

This is an extensive research review that will help to evaluate the efficacy of the Safe Haven in Belconnen. The results of this study are not yet available.

3) To date there has been limited research into the impacts of safe spaces, like the Safe Haven, on their guests and the people who care for them, which is why the ANU-led Co-Creating Safe Spaces research project was established. In the absence of published results from this study there is still limited available evidence or modelling for the evidence base of safe spaces and safe havens.

4) See response to question 1.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:



Date:

28/2/25

By the Minister for Mental Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith