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GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION

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**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT
NO 7, 2010: MANAGEMENT OF
FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS**

**Presented by
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Minister for Territory and Municipal Services**

Government Submission - Auditor-General's Report No 7, 2010: Management of Feedback and Complaints (the Report)

Introduction

The Government is pleased with the Audit's overall findings that indicate the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) and Canberra Connect have a sound framework within which they can recognise and respond to feedback and complaints provided by the ACT community. It was also noted the framework included a good management information system, and that Canberra Connect will continue to work with agencies to improve business practices associated with the updating of system information which is used to inform the community.

Most of the Auditor-General's nine recommendations have whole of Department implications in feedback and complaints management, while some are specific to Canberra Connect.

The Government has agreed with seven of the recommendations, and partially agreed with Recommendation 2 and noted Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 2 required TAMS provide more public information on processes for handling Government feedback and complaints, and the Department agreed to this in principle. Whilst Canberra Connect does take feedback and complaints on behalf of all ACT Government agencies, Canberra Connect is not currently in a position to mandate Customer Service Charters or complaints handling procedures and timelines at a whole of government level.

However, it is noted there is an opportunity to improve and consolidate the processes for handling feedback and complaints across government. Canberra Connect will work with the Chief Minister's Department (CMD) on developing a whole of government approach to feedback and complaints management. This will form the basis of further discussion in Management Council.

TAMS will implement a range of processes to improve the department's management of feedback and complaints, including:

- Improve the visibility of feedback and complaints mechanisms and provide more public information on the process of complaint management
- Consistent administrative procedures including policy setting out service standards
- Develop a strategy for maintaining the accuracy of information system data
- Improve monitoring and reporting of complaint and feedback data
- Seek feedback on complaints handling and review performance against performance indicators.

Recommendations in the Auditor-General's Report will assist TAMS to improve overall coordination and response to customer feedback and complaints, as well as facilitate the development of consistent guidelines, procedures and policies for all staff to follow in feedback and complaints management.

Government Position on Recommendations

Recommendation 1: TAMS should implement initiatives to improve the visibility of ACT Government feedback and complaints processes, especially utilising Canberra Connect infrastructure. This should include:

- a) clearly facilitating the provision of *complaints*, in addition to *feedback*, in public material and web-site information.
- b) Making on-line feedback and complaints options more visible; and
- c) Actively promoting on-line feedback and complaints options.

Agreed.

The Government agrees that initiatives will be implemented to improve the visibility and promotion of the ACT Government feedback and complaints process in public material and website information.

Recommendation 2: TAMS should provide more public information on Government processes for handling feedback and complaints. This should include:

- a) information on the administrative steps involved;
- b) expected timeframes; and
- c) limitations on its jurisdiction and capacity to address and resolve certain issues.

Agreed in part.

The Government agrees that processes within TAMS on the handling of feedback and complaints will be more clearly articulated to customers. It is also noted there is an opportunity to improve and consolidate the processes for handling feedback and complaints across government, and that Canberra Connect will work with CMD on developing a whole of government approach to feedback and complaints management. This will form the basis of further discussion in Management Council

Recommendation 3: Canberra Connect should develop consistent administrative procedures for recording all feedback and complaints received by telephone through the Canberra Connect Contact Centre.

Agreed.

The Government will ensure consistent procedural documentation for complaints handling be developed and implemented consistent with TAMS Guidelines.

Recommendation 4: TAMS should develop a strategy for maintaining the accuracy and currency of information within its management information systems, including Canberra Connect's Integrated Customer Service (ICS) System. This should involve continuously verifying the accuracy and currency of this information to ensure issues are directed to the right areas and staff.

Agreed.

The Government has agreed that a strategy for maintaining the accuracy and currency of information within TAMS management information systems will be developed.

Recommendation 5: TAMS should:

- a) **in the short term, endorse the ICS as the management information system for recording and managing feedback and complaints across TAMS;**
- b) **ensure key staff members with responsibility for managing feedback and complaints across TAMS have appropriate access to the ICS; and**
- c) **in the long term, identify and implement an appropriate management information system for recording and managing feedback and complaints.**

Noted.

The Government has endorsed ICS as the TAMS information management system for recording and managing feedback and complaints, ensuring appropriate access, in the short term. The long term identification and implementation of an appropriate system for recording and managing feedback and complaints is reliant on funding through subsequent budget processes. The Government will consider any possible action on this recommendation as part of the 2011-12 Budget process.

Recommendation 6: TAMS should develop policy and procedural guidance for the management of feedback and complaints for its staff, which includes minimum standards of services and customer service principles and ongoing communication, when appropriate, with the provider of the feedback or complaint.

Agreed.

The Government has agreed that Policy guidelines will be developed for the management of feedback and complaints across TAMS. These guidelines will include service standards, customer service principles, communication with the customer, monitoring and reporting expectations and process for gathering customer feedback on how their feedback was handled and resolved.

Recommendation 7: TAMS should improve the monitoring and reporting of feedback and complaints. Regular monitoring and reporting should address:

- a) **quantitative and qualitative aspects of feedback and complaints received, including the nature of the feedback or complaint and the business activities to which it relates; and**
- b) **progress in resolving feedback and complaints, including timeliness of resolution.**

Agreed.

The Government has agreed following implementation of the TAMS Policy on feedback and complaints handling, improved monitoring and reporting will be established in TAMS.

Where Service Level Agreements are in place between agencies and Canberra Connect, comprehensive reporting will continue to occur.

Provision of qualitative and quantitative information related to TAMS will be provided as part of the monthly Stewardship Report to the TAMS Executive Leadership Team.

Recommendation 8: TAMS and Canberra Connect should seek feedback from customers on their satisfaction with the way that their feedback or complaint was handled and resolved.

Agreed.

The Government has agreed that TAMS and Canberra Connect will implement processes for customers to provide feedback on their satisfaction with the way their feedback or complaint was handled and resolved.

Recommendation 9: TAMS and Canberra Connect should review and evaluate its feedback and complaints management against appropriate performance indicators.

Agreed.

The Government has agreed that performance indicators on customer satisfaction and timeliness will be established for TAMS and identified in the Monthly Stewardship Report.