



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING
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Submission Cover Sheet

Review of ACT health programs for
children and young people

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Introduction

In the ACT, children and young people make up approximately 32 per cent of the population, with 139,240 children and young people living in the ACT between July 2019 and June 2020¹. The foundation of good health early in life has resounding impacts on a child or young person's life, and significantly impacts how they grow and develop into adults.

The health of a child at birth is a key determinant of their health and wellbeing throughout their life². Early assessment and interventions for health concerns in the early years are vital for good health and wellbeing through childhood and into adult life. As children age different risk factors and determinants impact on health outcomes. Adolescents often face different health issues to younger children, including accessing and uptake of smoking and drinking at risky levels, poor nutrition, and decreasing exercise levels². These behaviours can lead to a higher risk of chronic conditions and premature death.

General health programs, including the early assessment of hearing, vision, speech, and motor skills are best undertaken early, prior to commencement of formal education, to provide the opportunity for appropriate early intervention and can minimise the long-term impacts for children and young people with these conditions.

Good health influences how children feel and go about their everyday lives and participate in family life, schooling, social and sporting activities³. During these early and formative years, there are unique opportunities for intervention and investment to prevent long-term adverse outcomes and minimise the burden of disease. Supporting good foundations for health and wellbeing will lead to better long-term health outcomes for our children and young people so they can achieve their full potential.

Health outcomes for children and young people commence prior to birth, with the decisions made through pregnancy having positive and negative impacts on a child's health and development. Prenatal exposure to alcohol can harm fetal brain development, in particular during the first trimester, and can result in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) for the child. While prevention is the priority for decreasing FASD in children, screening, diagnosis, and support play an important role in ongoing management and future success of these children.

While parents and carers play a crucial role in the health and wellbeing of their children, there is a key role here for assistance by all levels of government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and public and private health sectors.

The ACT Government has a large range of programs and services in place to help give young Canberrans the best start in life. For example, Canberra Health Services (CHS), including the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, provides acute inpatient and day services and outpatient services for children and young people in the ACT region. CHS has specialist neonatal intensive care for babies born before 34 weeks gestation or who have serious

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Estimated Resident Population by Single Year of Age, ACT data for July 2019 to June 2020, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/sep-2020#data-download>

2 Snapshot: Health of mothers and babies, July 2020, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-of-mothers-and-babies>

3 Australia's Children, 2020, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/health/the-health-of-australias-children>

health issues after birth. Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (CPHB) also provides and cares for babies who are sick or premature, from 34 weeks gestation up to six weeks of age, within the Special Care Nursery; and manages a large number of paediatric presentations to the CPHB Emergency Department.

The ACT Government welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry being undertaken by the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing (the Committee). This submission provides background on ACT screening and health assessments for hearing, vision, motor-skill difficulties and general health of children and young people, as well as the screening, diagnosis, assessment and treatment of FASD. The submission also sets out the ACT Government's work to implement the National FASD Action Plan 2018-2028.

Scope

For this submission, 'ACT health programs' has been taken to include ACTHD, CHS, public services provided by CPHB, Community Services Directorate (CSD) and services provided by ACT Government funded organisations.

The age range for 'children' and 'young people' has not been defined in the Terms of Reference by the Committee and for this submission has been taken to include children and young people between the ages of 0 and 18 – 24, depending on the program or service provided.

Services outlined in this submission are not inclusive of all services and programs delivered across the public health system, but those considered within scope of the Terms of Reference.

Screening and health assessments

Screening and health assessments are undertaken in many locations across the ACT including in hospital outpatient clinics, child and family health centres, and schools. Different services focus on different age groups and conditions, to encompass the needs of children and young people in the ACT region. The Centenary Hospital for Women and Children provides acute inpatient and day services, and outpatient services for children and young people in the ACT region.

The ACT Government also funds a number of NGOs to provide health programs or services for children and young people across a range of priority areas including alcohol and other drugs, primary care, and mental health. The work of these organisations is critical in complementing what can be achieved through the public health system (further information on NGOs funded by the ACT Government is at [Attachment A1](#)).

There are a variety of programs that support all children and young people in the ACT and surrounding region, including specific programs for different age groups. These take into consideration the different developmental milestones for children as well as health barriers for the community, to give children and young people the best start to life. [Attachment A2](#) provides a breakdown of the current services provided by ACTHD, CHS, CSD and CPHB, relevant to the Terms of Reference.

At birth, all children are provided with a newborn hearing screen, which tests for congenital hearing loss, and a blood test to screen for rare disorders. It is rare for a child to not be tested through this program. During the early years, there is an emphasis on prevention and intervention through early screening and awareness of developmental concerns, including vision, hearing, motor skills, speech and general health. The Maternal and Child Health (MACH) service works with parents and carers to identify development concerns. Infants and children are referred to CSD for further assessment and therapeutic intervention, or to other early intervention services. When problems are identified, referrals are made to specific services relevant to the issue including vision and hearing screening services, speech pathologists and physiotherapy.

The Kindergarten Health Check (KHC) is also a key opportunity for early identification of children with a higher risk of future mental and physical health challenges. The KHC occurs in the first year of formal schooling and takes into consideration parental assessment of their child and a physical assessment of weight, vision and hearing. Reports of concerns are provided to the parent and to the nominated General Practitioner (GP), along with referral pathways. Over 85 per cent of eligible children participate in this culturally embedded program, providing a valuable opportunity for early intervention for children and support for parents and GPs.

Specific programs for different community groups are also provided by CHS, including targeted programs for families experiencing vulnerability such as parental substance abuse, and paediatric and youth services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer children and young people. There are also speciality clinics for different health conditions including asthma, chronic illness, palliative care, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, those with developmental delay, or requiring genetic screening.

The emphasis on good mental health and wellbeing in children and young people is increasing with a greater awareness of the impact poor mental health can make on the potential of young people³. ACTHD has developed a variety of mental health and wellbeing programs in collaboration with external providers and/or funded by ACT Government, as outlined in Attachment A3.

There are a range of community-controlled health programs provided by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health service providers. The ACT Government provides funding to both Gungahlin Youth Aboriginal Corporation and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services to deliver services to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community. Attachment A4 outlines these services and the impact these services have on our community.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

FASD is a diagnostic term for the range of physical, cognitive, behavioural and neurodevelopmental abnormalities which can result from maternal drinking during pregnancy⁴. Diagnosis is complex and involves considerable investigations across maternal

4 National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan, 2018-2028,
<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-fasd-strategic-action-plan-2018-2028.pdf>

drinking habits, general physical and development assessment, including neurodevelopment.

In the ACT, Community Paediatrics through WYCCHP uses a comprehensive assessment tool to diagnose FASD; the Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of FASD.

Antenatal exposure to drug and alcohol is part of the routine history taking for most children seen at the Child at Risk Health Unit. There is no specific tool used for this information gathering.

Universal programs, such as the MACH development screening, provide early identification of concerns about the way a child is learning, developing and behaving, including children who may be impacted by FASD, leading to a referral for investigation and early intervention. Canberra Maternity Options Service asks about alcohol intake at the first visit. If clients do drink alcohol, they are offered a referral to drug and alcohol services, with an explanation about concerns for the foetus. At the MACH first home visit, alcohol use is asked about and breastfeeding and alcohol use discussed. The antenatal service at CHS routinely screens for alcohol consumption. If an issue is identified, information, counselling and supports are provided for reducing intake.

An Aboriginal Midwifery Access Program is run through Winnunga and in 2019-2020, the Program provided:

- support to 66 families and babies through the program;
- antenatal care to 102 women in 420 encounters; and
- postnatal care to 70 women.

The program offers individualised and flexible patient-centred care at the Winnunga clinic, the client's home, or other requested locations. The scope of the program includes high risk pregnancies, where a multi-disciplinary approach is required to support clients and provide optimal care.

Elements of the KHC may identify children who have physical or social development sequelae as a consequence of FASD. The results of the KHC are copied to the child's GP if nominated by the parents and this increases the GP's awareness of any challenges families and children may face. The KHC provides further opportunity to facilitate an awareness or diagnosis of FASD in previous undiagnosed children.

The National FASD Action Plan 2018-2028

The *National FASD Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028* (National FASD Plan) was endorsed in 2018 by all Australian governments through the National Drug Strategy Committee (NDSC) and Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum (MDAF). The National FASD Plan aims to improve the quality of life for children and adults who have FASD, and is built around four key national priorities:

1. Prevention
2. Screening and diagnosis
3. Support and management

4. Priority groups and people at increased risk.

The ACT Government continues to progress the national and ACT focused priorities through the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021* (DSAP) and through the *Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventative Health Plan 2020-2025*. In the DSAP, the ACT Government committed to implement appropriate actions at Territory level to support the National FASD Plan.

In the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021: Progress Report 2019-2020*, the ACT Government⁵:

- Established the National FASD Action Plan committee.
- Provided a Healthy Canberra Grant of \$181,801 to the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education for the Pregnant (Be a Hero Take Zero) project.
- Launched the Pregnant Pause Project in June 2020.
- Approved through the Food Ministers' Meeting, mandatory pregnancy warning labelling on alcohol containers in July 2020 as part of a Australia and New Zealand initiative.
- Released the peri-natal data set findings for 2019.
- Committed to continuing to develop responses to FASD in line with the National FASD Plan.

The *Review of COAG Councils and Ministerial Forums* report, noted the disbandment of the Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum and National Drug Strategy Council⁶. The ACT Government is awaiting information from the Commonwealth on the future national alcohol, tobacco and other drugs governance arrangements.

5 ACT Government, *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021*, [https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/6815/4527/8063/ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-21.pdf](https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/6815/4527/8063/ACT_Drug_Strategy_Action_Plan_2018-21.pdf)

6 Review of COAG Councils and Ministerial Forums, October 2020, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/final-report-review-coag-councils-ministerial-forums.pdf>

Attachment A1: Non-government organisations funded by ACT Government through ACT Health Directorate to provide health programs or services for children and young people

The ACT Government funds a number of non-government organisations (NGOs) to provide health programs or services for children and young people across a range of priority areas including alcohol and other drugs, primary care, and mental health. The work of these organisations is critical in complementing what can be achieved through the public health system. Table 1 provides an overview of these funded programs.

Table 1: NGOs funded by ACT Government to provide health program or services for children and young people.

NGO	Program	Target Group & Service Overview
CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn	Sobering Up Shelter	A voluntary overnight residential service operating 11:00pm to 11:00am Thursday, Friday and Saturday for people 18 years and over. Providing alcohol, tobacco and other drug assessments, mental health screening, brief interventions, suicide risk assessments, support, information and referrals.
Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation	Harm Reduction: Information and Education; and Support and Case Management	Work with Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander young people who are at risk of and/or experiencing problematic alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.
Ted Noffs Foundation	Residential withdrawal and rehabilitation; Support and case management; and Harm Reduction - Information and Education	Young people with severe alcohol and other drug problems can access specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment services.
Anglicare Canberra & Goulburn	Junction Youth Health Service	Deliver health care services to young people unable to access mainstream health care providers with a focus on at risk youth.
Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation	Street Beat Youth Outreach Service	A youth outreach service to facilitate information distribution, advice, early diagnosis and support for at risk young people.
Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation	Health Lifestyles and Chronic Disease Prevention Program	Deliver a range of health promotion activities providing information, practical workshops, improved access to health services, support and training with a view to improving the health of young people.
Marymead Child and Family Centre	Circle of Security	Intensive 20-week Course for families with children aged 11 months to 4 years regarded as high risk with the focus being on parent education and psychotherapeutic intervention.
Wellways	Women's Transitional Accommodation Service	Provision of short to medium term supported accommodation and transitional outreach support for women over the age of 18 years.
Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services	Primary Health Services	Hearing Health Program for infants and children, and Dental Health Program for youth and adults.

Capital Health Network	Low Intensity Services - Headspace Canberra	Young people aged 12 to 25 years with or at risk of a mental disorder will have better access to mental health services; improved mental health and wellbeing on exit from services; and increased engagement with external education and health services.
CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn	Adolescent Step Up/Step Down Supported Accommodation and Transitional Outreach Support (STEPS)	The target group are young people aged 13 to 17 experiencing mental health issues and/or a diagnosed mental illness who reside in the ACT.
CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn	Youth Outreach Support Program	Home-based outreach support for young people aged 12 to 25 years who are experiencing difficulties with mental illness residing in the ACT.
Capital Region Community Services	Bungee Program	Provide creativity-based participatory/expressive activities for children and young people in the ACT aged between 5 and 18 years who are at risk of mental illness.
Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation	Early Intervention Mental Health and Wellbeing Service	An early intervention program to respond to the high incidences of mental ill health and social and emotional wellbeing problems experienced by at risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples in the ACT, through early diagnosis, treatment and advice.
Men's Link	Counselling program for 10 to 12 year old males	Counselling program to support younger boys in the 10 to 12 year age group currently experiencing a service gap between children's services and youth services.
Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)	Mental Illness Education	Provide mental illness education programs across schools and workplaces with the primary objective to promote early intervention in addressing mental illness and reduce stigma.
Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)	Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) program	Year 9 cohort (14 to 16 years) in ACT secondary schools.
Society of St Vincent de Paul	Compeer program	Delivery of individually matched community based social support services to people over 18 years living with a diagnosed mental illness currently receiving clinical management.
Stride Mental Health Limited	Southside Community Step Up Step Down facility	Short term psychosocial supported residential accommodation; early intervention and follow-up support for Step Up Step Down services; and outreach support - for ACT residents aged 18 to 65 years.
Wellways	Youth Mental Health Step Up/Step Down Support Accommodation	Provision of short to medium term residential mental health service for people aged 18 to 25 years, and transitional outreach support.

Attachment A2: Health assessment and screening programs

The following breakdown the general health and screening programs provided across Canberra Health Services (CHS), Calvary Public Hospital Bruce and the Community Services Directorate (CSD), relative to the Terms of Reference.

General health and screening programs

Paediatric Outpatient Department

The Paediatric Outpatient Department runs an extensive outpatient clinic service including:

- Cardiology Clinic
- Constipation Clinic
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Dermatology Clinic
- Diabetes Clinic
- ENT Clinic
- Endocrine Clinic
- Gastroenterology Clinic
- General Paediatrics Clinic
- Genetics Clinic
- Immunology Clinic
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease Clinic
- Neurology Clinic
- Neuromuscular Clinic
- Oncology/ Haematology Clinic
- Paediatric Fracture Clinic
- Paediatric Surgical Clinic
- Psychology Clinic
- Respiratory Clinic
- Rheumatology Clinic
- Sleep Clinic

Hearing Test Programs

National Newborn Hearing Screen - Delays in the identification and treatment of permanent childhood hearing impairment may profoundly affect quality of life in terms of language acquisition, social and emotional development, and education and employment prospects. All states and territories in Australia have universal newborn hearing screening including the ACT. Identified children are followed up by the CHS Audiology unit.

The Children's Hearing Service - The CHS, Women Youth and Children, Community Health Programs (WYCCHP) provide the Children's Hearing Service for children from 18 months to 18 years. This includes a full hearing assessment including history, otoscopy and tympanometry.

Child Health Targeted Support Services

Child Health Targeted Support Services offers a Community Paediatric service for children and adolescents under 16 years of age requiring assessment, treatment or review relating to suspected or established developmental delay or disability and behavioural or emotional disturbance, including the impact of abuse and/or neglect.

Children's Asthma Education Service

This service provides up to date asthma information and education to health professionals and children and young people up to 18 years, with a diagnosis of asthma, and their families.

Children and Young People Equipment Loans Scheme

This service is managed by the CDS and loans equipment to assist with mobility, communication, and activities of daily living for children and young people in the ACT up to 16 years for a period of up to 3 months. Access to the service requires a referral from a suitable Allied Health professional.

Genetic Service

This service provides genetic counselling and clinical genetic consultations for people with concerns about medical findings in a pregnancy, or of an inherited condition in themselves, their children, or their family.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) paediatric and youth services

Approximately 70 young people (up to the age of 18 years) are currently accessing care at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children for a range of LGBTIQ related services.

Nutrition services

Offered through WYCCHP, this is a clinic-based nutrition assessment, counselling and advice service for infants, children, and young people aged under 25 years and all women during pregnancy and up to two years after birth.

Outpatient Audiology

This service provides assessment and onward referral of children with suspected, or risk of, hearing impairment.

Paediatric and young adult diabetes service

The paediatric and young adult diabetes service is a multidisciplinary service comprising of endocrinologists, diabetes nurse educators, a dietitian, and a social worker.

Paediatric Outpatient Nurse Clinic

This nurse clinic specialises in wound management, burns and supporting children with chronic health needs, gastrostomy, or nasogastric feeding tubes.

Paediatric Palliative Care Service

The Paediatric Palliative Care Service provides expert clinical care and leads the coordination of palliative care for children and young people with life-limiting conditions in the ACT.

Physiotherapy-Juvenile Arthritis

Individual physiotherapy is provided for paediatric clients attending rheumatology clinics.

Physiotherapy-Paediatric Respiratory

Physiotherapy is provided for chronic respiratory conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis.

Psychology Chronic Illness Clinic

This outpatient clinic provides clinical psychology services to children and adolescents who have a chronic illness.

Speech Pathology-Paediatric videofluoroscopy service

Videofluoroscopy assessments are provided for children under 18 years with dysphagia.

Young Adult Transition Clinic

A specialist diabetes/endocrine service at Canberra Hospital.

Specific programs for different age ranges

The following breakdown of ACT public health services relevant to the Terms of Reference have been grouped by age range to highlight the evolving health care needs at different ages through a child or young person's life.

Newborns to school aged children (0 to 12 years)

Maternal and Child Health

The Maternal and Child Health (MACH) service provides development checks at 0-4 weeks, 6-8 weeks, 4, 6, 12 and 18 months, 2, 3 and 4 years. Parents also complete a set of questions, the Parents Evaluation of Development Status (PEDS) that is provided at each health check from 6 months of age and helps the MACH nurse or GP identify concerns about the way the child is learning, developing, or behaving. Any identified concerns are referred to the appropriate service for further assessment and intervention, including Child Development Service, CHS Community Paediatric, and Children's Hearing Service. Support, education and information on all aspects of parenting is also provided.

Newborn Hearing Screening Program

Please see 'general health and screening programs'.

Vision screening

CHS offers an orthoptist service, which provides a secondary vision screening service for children from birth to six years if issues are raised following an initial MACH screen or Kindergarten Health Check.

CHS Centenary Hospital for Women and Children Paediatric Blue Star clinic

The Blue Star Clinic is an outpatient clinic that works with IMPACT (Integrated Multi Agencies for Parents and Children Together Program, see below) and the perinatal programs providing ongoing support for babies who are born with drug dependencies or other vulnerabilities as a result of parental substance use.

Integrated Multi-Agencies for Parents and Children Together Program (IMPACT)

The IMPACT program is a multidisciplinary service which coordinates information sharing and service provision to make a positive difference to long term health outcomes for children. The program addresses gaps in the service system for families experiencing vulnerability and acts to strengthen the sector's capacity to support the complex needs of clients. The IMPACT Program is accessible to families who are pregnant and/or until the child is two years of age.

Multidisciplinary cleft palate clinic

For children born with cleft lip or palate, this clinic offers surgical and post-operative management. Antenatal education is provided for expectant parents of children with cleft lip or palate.

Multidisciplinary feeding clinic

This Speech Pathology and Dietetic tertiary referral service provides support for children with complex feeding issues.

Physiotherapy-Neonatal orthopaedics

Physiotherapy led services are provided for congenital orthopaedic and neuromuscular disorders therapy.

Speech Pathology-Infant feeding clinic

This Speech Pathology led outpatient service is for babies less than eight weeks of age with difficulties feeding due to an underlying medical issue.

Tresillian Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Family Centre

The ACT Government funds the following services for 0-3 year old's:

- Complex feeding and lactation issues
- Failure to thrive
- Unsettled babies
- Mood disorders
- Children at risk
- Special needs e.g. twins and multiple births
- Child or family behavioural problems
- Families with no parent support
- Sleep and settling strategies
- Diet and nutrition

In the 2019-2020 financial year, 958 parents and 980 children were admitted to QEII for a variety of services.

Child Development Service (CDS)

The CDS provides allied health assessment, information, and referral services for children in the ACT at risk of developmental delay up to the age of 6 years who are not engaged with or likely to be eligible for support from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or their Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) partner (EACH).

After assessment, CDS may offer brief, time-limited support to these children through group workshops or a 1:1 clinic (up to 5 sessions). There is a very small cohort where longer-term developmental monitoring is provided, such as the extremely premature infants who are at high risk of developing Cerebral Palsy. This is to ensure children can be linked with longer term supports as soon as the potential impact of prematurity becomes evident.

CDS does not provide longer term therapeutic intervention for children. If it is identified that a child would benefit or requires access to ongoing therapeutic supports, there are two referral pathways:

- NDIS ECEI partner (EACH) for assessment of eligibility if the child is likely to receive a funded support package through the NDIS; and
- If identified as unlikely to be eligible for NDIS, families are referred to private allied health services as currently there are no government funded long term therapeutic early intervention services for this cohort.

If a child is referred to CDS and they are currently involved or likely to be eligible for an NDIS support package (for example: a child with a diagnosed disability such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome – a list D diagnosis) this child is not eligible for CDS services. However, they would be supported to contact the NDIS ECEI partner (EACH) as the gateway to an NDIS support package.

Specific services offered through CDS include:

Intake and Drop-In-Clinics (DIC)

This service provides a pathway for parents and other referrers to seek advice, find out if further services are necessary and where these services are available. DIC are delivered at Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre, Gungahlin Child and Family Centre and West Belconnen Child and Family Centre in addition to the Child Development Service at the Holder site.

Approximately 70% of children accessing the CDS are under 5 years of age at the time they received services, and approximately 6% of families accessing the CDS identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

The service has a range of Allied Health Professionals who offer developmental assessments and advice/referral to families who have concerns regarding their child's development. The service also has Early Childhood teachers who provide supported playgroups. The playgroups focus on assisting parents to promote development through play. This is offered to families experiencing vulnerability and complex support needs.

Allied Health Services

Speech Pathology - Speech pathologists at the CDS offer a range of services including assessment, advice and strategies to assist parents to support the development of their children aged up to 6 years, in the areas of:

- Understanding language;
- Combining words into sentences to express meaning;
- Speaking clearly so others can understand the message;
- Stuttering on words and sounds;
- Social communication skills such as difficulties interacting with others;
- Breast and bottle feeding;
- Transition to solids;
- Parent workshops/groups or short term 1:1 clinic for families up to 5 sessions; and
- Ongoing therapeutic intervention is not provided by the CDS speech pathologists.

Physiotherapy - Physiotherapists at the CDS offer a range of services including assessment, advice, and strategies to assist parents to support the development of their children aged up to 6 years, in the areas of:

- Foot position such as in-toeing, out-toeing, flat feet;
- Clumsiness;
- Delays in reaching milestones such as sitting, standing, walking;
- Delays in gross motor development such as jumping, hopping, climbing;
- Difficulties with catching, throwing, kicking balls;
- Parent workshops/groups or short term 1:1 clinic for families up to 5 sessions; and
- Ongoing therapeutic intervention is not provided by the CDS physiotherapists.

Occupational Therapy – Occupational Therapists at the CDS offer a range of services including assessment, advice and strategies to assist parents to support the development of their children aged up to 6 years, in the areas of:

- Fine motor skills such as grasping toys and pencils, managing small items including buttons and zips and coordinating the movements of their fingers to complete activities;
- Self-care activities including brushing teeth, getting dressed, using utensils and toileting;
- Play skills including interacting with toys, playing alongside and with other children and connecting with parents/carers through play;
- Appropriate sensory responses to allow your child to participate in everyday activities such as completing routine hygiene activities (washing hair, brushing

teeth, getting dressed), eating a varied diet and being able to settle for play and learning opportunities;

- Parent workshops/groups or short term 1:1 clinic for families up to 5 sessions; and
- Ongoing therapeutic intervention is not provided by the CDS occupational therapists.

Social work - Social Workers at the CDS work with families to identify needs and refer and link in with appropriate supports. Families eligible for social work support are those that are already engaged with the service.

Autism Assessments

Free autism assessments are provided for children aged up to 12 years. A referral from a Paediatrician or Psychiatrist is required.

Therapy Services

Ongoing therapeutic intervention is not provided by the CDS for children and young people diagnosed with Autism. If further supports are required after assessment, families are referred to EACH. EACH is the NDIS service partner responsible for assessing eligibility for NDIS services and/or to private therapy and health services.

Child and Family Centres

The Child and Family Centres in West Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin offer a range of initial screenings, assessments, referrals and group programs for children. Services are available for children pre-birth to 8 years; however, selected services can be offered to children up to 12 years of age.

The group programs are focused on general health and wellbeing, including mental health, and families requiring further assistance are referred to specialist services. CDS also provide Drop-in Clinics at the centres. Many of these group programs are run in partnership with the community sector and government directorates.

Table 1: Programs offered at Child and Family Centres

Group Facilitated by	Program	Target Group & Service Delivery
Child and Family Centre	Drop-in parenting support	<p>Parents and carers are invited to visit their local Child and Family Centre to chat with a trained professional about parenting, ask questions and to get information. This can lead to ongoing, one-to-one support with Child and Family Workers.</p> <p>Staff are available to speak with parents and service providers — Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.</p>

Group Facilitated by	Program	Target Group & Service Delivery
Child and Family Centre	Ongoing Support	Child and Family Workers are available to provide ongoing support to children and their families. No two families are the same, so Child and Family Workers can provide a tailored service to families.
Child and Family Centre	Children's Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing Clinic	Consultation clinics for parents and carers of children under 8 years to provide information on child development and behaviour, relationships and strategies to support these concerns.
Child and Family Centres and Canberra Regional Community Services	Circle of Security relationship-based parenting program	This international and widely-researched program provides opportunities to develop and enhance a secure relationship between parents and their children. Parents will learn how to recognise, understand and meet their children's emotional needs in order to prevent and manage behavioural and emotional difficulties. This is an eight week, small group program which uses observation, reflection, practice and discussion. The group is appropriate for parents of children aged birth to 8 years.
Child and Family Centre	Bringing Up Great Kids	A program to help parents explain and reflect on their parenting style and their children's behaviour. The program provides parents with a greater understanding of how to meet their children's needs and communicate with them.
Child and Family Centre	Cool Kids	A group for primary school children aged 8–12 years, focusing on teaching them better ways to manage anxiety.
Child and Family Centre	Cool Little Kids	A group for parents of children aged 3–8 years, helping them learn strategies to assist their anxious child.
Child and Family Centre	Tuning into Kids	A parenting program that aims to give parents and carers helpful ways of teaching their child to develop skills for good emotional intelligence. Tuning into Kids teaches parents awareness and regulation of their own and their child's emotions. It also teaches parents skills to assist children to verbally label and manage their emotions, and to problem solve. The program assists parents in guiding their children's behaviour within appropriate limits.
Child and Family Centre	GET UP (Group Engaging The	A group for young parents under 25 years where parents can meet new friends, tap into creative skills, play with their child/children, connect with support and find out useful parenting tips.

Group Facilitated by	Program	Target Group & Service Delivery
	Under 25 Parents)	
West Belconnen Child and Family Centre and Canberra Regional Community Services.	Deadly Bubs	A supported playgroup for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preschoolers and their families, focusing on strengthening community and cultural connections and promoting positive child–parent relationships.
Child and Family Centres and partners	Koori Playgroup	A supported playgroup for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children birth to 5 years and their parents and carers.
West Belconnen Child and Family Centre and partners	Koori Boys	An opportunity for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys to come together and explore opportunities to connect with culture in a culturally safe and supported environment. This group focuses on healthy mind, body and spirit, building strong connections to culture and Country, growing young people as future leaders and strengthening relationships between schools, communities and families.
West Belconnen Child and Family Centre and partners	Koori Girls 'Yurwang Gulwan'	An opportunity for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls to come together and explore their connection with culture in a culturally safe and supported environment. This group focuses on healthy mind, body and spirit, building strong connections with culture and Country, growing young people as future leaders and strengthening relationships between schools, communities and families.
West Belconnen Child and Family Centre and partners	Learn, Giggle and Grow	Parents and children have the opportunity to interact and play in a safe and supported environment. The emphasis is on encouraging parents to engage with their children in play, enrich the parent–child relationship and help parents build confidence. Groups run from weeks 2–9 of each school term.
West Belconnen Child and Family	Mullabu Yura Boys Group	A group for primary school aged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys. The group, which is supported by male mentors, meets weekly to

Group Facilitated by	Program	Target Group & Service Delivery
Centre and partners		celebrate culture and connection with each other and their community.
Child and Family Centre	Parents as Teachers	A monthly home visit program to help parents recognise everyday learning opportunities in their children's lives. During visits, trained parent educators provide parents with practical information and guidance to help their child develop skills essential for later learning. Emphasis is placed on developing children's thinking and curiosity, language, motor and social skills. Support can start later in the prenatal period and may continue until a child reaches 3 years of age.
Child and Family Centre and partners	POPPY (Parents' Opportunity to Participate in Play with their Young)	A supported group for mums and dads focusing on mental health, wellbeing and resilience. Parents can meet other parents and share experiences while having fun playing with their children.
Gungahlin Child and Family Centre and partners	Tiddas Girls Group	A group for primary school aged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls. The group meets weekly to celebrate culture and connection to each other and their community. A range of fun and creative activities are offered to help build confidence and self-esteem.
West Belconnen Child and Family Centre and partners	Yurwang Bullarn Strong Women's Group	A group focusing on community connectedness. It provides local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with an opportunity to socialise regularly and engage in activities addressing art and culture, self-care, health and wellbeing
Gungahlin Child and Family Centre	Atfaal Family Playgroup	A group for Muslim families with children under 5 years living in Gungahlin. The group aims to build links with the community and provide access to parenting information and services.
Child and Family Centre	Multicultural Group	A playgroup to assist multicultural families with children from birth to 5 years to settle into the community by providing them with a range of support services. The playgroup also supports families by nurturing their child's development through play.

Group Facilitated by	Program	Target Group & Service Delivery
West Belconnen Child and Family Centre	South Sudanese Group	A group for South Sudanese families with children from birth to 5 years. The group aims to build links with the community and improve access to parenting information and services.

Kindergarten aged children (4 to 6 years)

Kindergarten Health Check

The Kindergarten Health Check (KHC) is a universal screening program offered to all children in the ACT in their first year of formal schooling. The KHC has been offered in the ACT for over 30 years and consists of two components:

1. A CHS physical health check: height, weight and BMI, and a vision and hearing screen; and
2. Academic Unit of General Practice (AUGP) parent questionnaire and parent surveys; the Parents Evaluation of Development Status (PEDS), Strengths and Difficulties and Adverse Childhood Experiences surveys.

The KHC is culturally embedded in the ACT and over 85% of eligible children completed the KHC in 2019.

Results of the physical KHC are sent to the parent (with referral options) and to the GP, if one is nominated by the School Health Team and results of the questionnaires are sent to the nominated GP by the AUGP. If no GP is nominated but there is a high level of concern the parent is contacted regarding seeking further help.

Table 2: 2019 Kindergarten Health Check data

Participation status for 2019 Kindergarten Health Check	2019 student numbers
Number of children who could participate in KHC	6019
Number who completed Parental questionnaire component of KHC	5560
Number who completed school nurse physical check component of KHC	5178

In early 2020, the school nurse physical check component of the KHC was cancelled due to COVID-19, with limited space offered later in 2020 at special KHC clinics for parents to self-refer if they were worried.

Together these instruments provide important screening information about which children are at higher risk of future mental and physical health challenges. Results of the physical

KHC are sent to the parent, along with referral options, and to the GP, if one is nominated by the SHT. Results of the questionnaires are sent to the nominated GP by the AUGP. If no GP is nominated, but there is a high level of concern, the parent is contacted by a nurse regarding pathways to seek further help.

The ACTHD has partnered with the ANU and Capital Health Network (CHN) to provide GPs with tools and training to assist them to consider the KHC results and take appropriate courses of action in partnership with their patient families. CHN has linked KHC into its web-based assessment, management and referral pathway support system that assists primary care clinicians to navigate evidence-based clinical management and referral options available locally across the ACT and south east NSW.

Attachment A3: Mental Health and Wellbeing programs

The following mental health and wellbeing programs, relevant to the Terms of Reference, are run in collaboration between ACT Health Directorate and external providers or are funded by ACT Government.

CatholicCare Adolescent (13-17 years) Step Up/Step Down

This program is supporting young people through early intervention and prevention strategies. It provides support for people 13-17 years of age who are experiencing moderate to severe symptoms of mental illness who require support, but not hospitalisation; or who are about to exit hospital after a period of acute care but are not quite ready to return home and would benefit from transitional, sub-acute support. This is a voluntary residential program that provides support for up to three months. Young people participate in a range of social and therapeutic activities through a combination of case management and clinical support. The program assists residents to develop skills and resources to manage mental health and emotional wellbeing in future.

Over the 2019-20 financial year, 28 young people attended the STEPS program.

CatholicCare Youth Outreach & Support

This is a psychosocial support service for young people, aged 10-25 years of age in the ACT experiencing moderate to severe mental distress. The service provides outreach support using a combination of therapy and case management to support young people in their mental health recovery.

Over the 2019-20 financial year, 62 young people received support from this program.

Low Intensity Headspace

This program, currently delivered by Marathon Health, is for young people with or at risk of mild mental illness. It offers a first step in the stepped care approach to mental health support services. The program offers resources and support quickly (without need for referral), through a range of modalities including face to face, group work, telephone and digital interviews. Typically, it involves a number of short sessions as a time limited, structured and less costly alternative to traditional psychological services.

Over the 2019-20 financial year, there were 459 occasions of service that were provided through the low intensity program.

Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)

MIEACT are funded to provide mental health education including sessions for senior secondary schools and college students; and staff and volunteers at community, Government agencies and private practices including front line staff and tertiary students. They are specifically funded to deliver Body Image eating disorders prevention programs for young women and men. This program aims to increase the awareness of prevalence, psychological and physical impact of body image issues, and to increase help seeking behaviour and provide linkages to appropriate service providers available in the ACT. They

also provide multimedia presentations produced by volunteers about mental illness, including PTSD and their 'Opening Minds' program.

MIEACT also tailor mental health education programs to meet the specific needs of schools and ages groups including programs addressing stress and anxiety and bullying behaviours. Additional funding provided in response to COVID-19 allowed MIEACT to extend general mental health and stress focused programs into the online space, this complemented the digitised collection of video stories co-produced with lived experience presenters and are accessible to schools and program hosts.

Over the 2019-20 financial year, MIEACT delivered 157 Education Sessions to youth audiences, helping to reach approximately 5,700 young people.

Wellways Youth (18-25 years) Step Up/Step Down

This is a recovery focussed residential program that aims to prevent relapse and assist people in recovery from an acute episode of mental illness. The program provides a 'step up' from the community into a highly supportive environment for young adults who may be becoming unwell and at risk of a hospital admission. It also provides a 'step down' for young adults who have been unwell, admitted to a psychiatric in-patient unit and who would benefit from additional support to transition back into the community. Supports are matched and timed to individual's self-identified priorities.

The Youth Navigation Portal

The Youth Navigation Portal (Portal) will support the mental health of children and young people aged 0-25 years in the ACT and be an online navigation tool for children, young people and their parents/carers to find and access mental health services, support and information. The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing are in the process of procuring a community organisation to lead and manage the Portal as well as a provider to build the IT component of the Portal. It is anticipated the Portal will be released in September 2021.

Youth Aware of Mental Health

Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) is an evidenced-based program developed to promote mental health and address suicidal behaviour in young people. The YAM program is being rolled out to all Year 9 students in the ACT in collaboration with the Black Dog Institute and Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT). Focussing on prevention and early support, YAM promotes and protects the mental health and wellbeing of young people through encouraging the development of skills to deal with stress and crisis, identify signs of distress in peers and encouraging help-seeking behaviours.

The program commenced in ACT schools in Term 1 2020. To date, across 2020-21 the YAM program has been delivered to approximately 2,843 Year 9 students across 17 ACT Public, Catholic and Independent Schools. In 2021, all schools participating in the roll out are invited to participate in the evaluation of the program to measure efficacy of YAM in reducing suicidal thoughts and depression and increasing mental health literacy and resilience.

Attachment A4: Preventative and health promotion programs

The following outlines preventative and health promotion programs to support children and young people, relevant to the Terms of Reference.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) received a two-year grant of \$181,801 (GST exclusive) from 2019-20 through the ACT Health Promotion Grants Program for the Pregnant Pause - be a hero, take zero program.

This program aims to build on the current 'Pregnant Pause –swap the pub for your bub' campaign to create an environment where women are supported by the whole community to have alcohol-free pregnancies.

The National Health and Medical Research Council's alcohol guidelines say women who are pregnant or planning pregnancy should not drink any alcohol. This is because alcohol can cause miscarriage, still or premature birth, low birth weights and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Pregnant Pause has been active in the ACT since 2014. The focus to date has been on supporting individual women, informed by research that shows that it is easier for pregnant women to abstain from alcohol during pregnancy when those closest to them also abstain. The original proposal of delivering a face-to-face campaign was impacted by COVID-19, resulting in a shift to online engagement through targeted placement of content, including short videos on social media, and branded content partnerships with local online media outlets and place-based platforms. This enabled a more nuanced approach to engaging target audiences, track and monitor the sentiment and success of the engagement with different types of content and messages, quickly adapt and evolve our content and messaging, as well as tap into existing engaged communities of Canberrans.

FARE intends to increase the influence of Pregnant Pause in this next phase by garnering community-wide support and creating community heroes. The project will transition the focus of Pregnant Pause from the individual and their support group to the ACT community as a whole, establishing the principle of alcohol-free pregnancies as a core community value. The program will engage with individuals, workplaces, organisations, health professionals and medical centres to be ambassadors and/or supporters of Pregnant Pause.

Fresh Tastes

This program supports ACT primary schools to improve their food and drink environments in partnership with the Education Directorate as well as community and business organisations. Schools participating in Fresh Tastes are provided with intensive support for three years to take a whole school, strengths-based approach to improving their food and drink environment and culture. Fresh Tastes provides free support to help schools implement their annual action plans including financial grants, professional learning, curriculum materials and discounted services from local businesses and community organisations.

Girls: It's Your Move

Run in a partnership between ACTHD and the Education Directorate (EDU), this program focuses on improving physical activity levels in adolescent girls through student led projects.

Healthier Choices Canberra Junior Sport Initiative

This initiative is a partnership with Sport and Recreation and ACT Health Directorate to work with junior sporting clubs over six sporting codes to attain and retain healthy sponsorship arrangements and increase the sales of healthy options at the canteen.

There are seven sporting organisations and their affiliated junior sports clubs partnering in the program. This provides potential reach to 41,000 junior sports players.

It's Your Move

This is an ACT Health initiative that empowers high school students to develop creative solutions to improve school health. It is delivered in partnership with the EDU. In addition to the delivery of It's Your Move: Entrepreneurs as a classroom module, the current focus is on working with students, the EDU and the school community to develop the outdoor environment to improve the mental and physical health and wellbeing of students.

Sixty-three teachers have participated in either face to face or online professional learning as part of this program. This is in addition to the 13 schools and 6,900 students that have participated in 'It's Your Move' including Entrepreneurs, Create a Café and Girls: It's Your Move programs.

It's Your Move: Create a Café

This initiative is a partnership with YMCA Canberra and the ACT Council of P&C Associations which supports eight public high schools to transform their dining space, and the food and drink environment of their school.

Kids at Play Active Play

This is a capacity building program that is designed to improve early childhood educators' skills to promote active play and teach fundamental movement skills to children aged three and up in early childhood settings (including long day care, preschool and Kindergarten to year two in primary schools).

Ride or Walk to School

This program encourages students to travel actively to school.

Attachment A5: Targeted programs for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples

The following outline activities undertaken by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to support young people.

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation

Awareness, Response and Healing Program

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation (Gugan Gulwan) undertakes a range of activities to build knowledge, awareness and the means for community to cope and provide self-care when dealing with the impacts of mental health, suicide and preventable community deaths, including:

- development of a website, organisational brochures, social media and SMS texting to clients;
- clients are supported at Bimberi Youth Detention Centre (Bimberi) and the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC);
- the model of care includes individualised case plans and clinical referrals; and
- validated screening tools are used to measure service user outcomes including reduction in severity of dependence, amount/frequency of drug use and improvements in mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Early Intervention Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

This is an early intervention program designed to respond to the high incidences of mental ill health and social and emotional wellbeing problems experienced by at risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the ACT, through early diagnosis, treatment and advice. In the period 2019-20, this service provided 89 people aged 12-25 years with support over 5,178 occasions, including 48 mental health referrals.

Harm Reduction

This program provides information and education, and support and case management. Gugan Gulwan works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who are at risk of and/or experiencing problematic alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, their families and the community to deliver services to the priority region of ACT residents.

Healthy Lifestyles and Chronic Disease Prevention Program

Gugan Gulwan delivers a range of health promotion activities, providing information, practical workshops, improved access to health services, support and training with a view to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, including:

- the Parenting Our Way program provided 100 females (aged 20 to 70 years) with a health and wellbeing program during COVID to reduce isolation;
- two back to school programs;

- IT support to students to access internet connection during COVID school closures;
- school holiday programs (42 participants aged 8-16 years in January 2020, and 64 in the October school holiday program), 3 nutrition sessions;
- a youth lunch program (average of 18 students aged 12-18 years per session);
- a Young Women's Mentoring Group (10 sessions for 10 to 14 females ages 12-15 years – program run twice); and
- a Young Men's Mentoring Program (10 sessions for 10 males aged 8-12 years – program run twice).

Street Beat Youth Outreach Service

This youth outreach service facilitates information distribution, advice, early diagnosis and support for at risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people through:

- 54 night patrols (suspended during COVID-19 restrictions); and
- 2,071 condoms and information packs distributed.

An unquantified outcome is the relationships built with homeless young people and referrals for accommodation and food support.

Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health and Community Services

In 2019-2020 Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (Winnunga) had 4,645 clients, through 66,455 encounters. This is a 9% increase from the previous year. The demographics of those accessing these services are:

- 82 per cent of clients were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander;
- 94 per cent of Winnunga clients lived in the ACT and Queanbeyan region; and
- 80 per cent of all clients were ACT residents.

Winnunga delivers these services to support the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT, including providing input to draft policies, strategies and issues impacting health and wellbeing, participation in conferences and workshops, and supporting and providing opportunities for community engagement activities.

Winnunga is funded by the ACT Government for a variety of health and wellbeing programs, including Primary Health services which include the components of Hearing Health Program for infants and children, and Dental Health Program for youth and adults. The following Primary Health Services were provided in 2019-2020:

- Midwifery Access Program (419 antenatal checks and 2,854 occasions of service, and 1,244 occasions of postnatal services);
- Hearing Health Program (187 children under 14 years were screened with 205 service encounters);
- Dental Health Program (2,651 occasions of services);

- Correctional Outreach Service (644 service encounters at AMC, and 1 for a client released from Bimberi); and
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Program (251 face to face services and 121 telehealth services).

In respect of the Aboriginal Midwifery Access Program run through Winnunga, in 2019-2020⁴, the Program provided:

- support to 66 families and babies through the program;
- antenatal care to 102 women in 420 encounters; and
- postnatal care to 70 women.

The program offers individualised and flexible patient-centred care at the Winnunga clinic, the client's home or other requested locations. The scope of the program includes high risk pregnancies, where a multi-disciplinary approach is required to support clients and provide optimal care.

Harm Reduction activities include, information and education, support and case management and the Tackle Smoking program. Winnunga works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are at risk of and/or experiencing problematic alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; their families and the community, to deliver an alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment and support programs delivered by alcohol and drug workers with priority given to ACT residents.

In 2019-20, 209 clients were provided with 407 occasions of service; 56 smoking cessation sessions held with an average of five participants each, and eight outreach smoking cessation sessions conducted.

Hearing Health program

In 2019-20 Winnunga secured new equipment to offer QAE testing (Transient Evoked Otoacoustic Emission testing) to assist behavioural hearing tests and provide an alternative to hearing tests for clients too young or unable to be tested due to disability. A portable Tympanometry machine is used for testing of babies under 6 months of age.

Winnunga provides a hearing assessment and ear health school program, visiting ACT Government Primary schools and Koori pre-school sites to conduct hearing surveillance and testing. This program is separate to the Kindergarten Health Check undertaken by ACT Health's Academic Unit of General Practice and CHS's School Health Team

In 2019-2020 occasions of Audiologist service provided by Allied Health Professionals were 10.1 per cent of the 3001 occasions of service provided by Winnunga¹.

¹ Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services LTD 2019-2020 Annual Report, <https://winnunga.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf>