

2025

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS, INDUSTRY AND RECREATION

—

REPORT 1 - INQUIRY INTO ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2023-24

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

**Presented by
Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister
September 2025**

Introduction

On Tuesday, 3 December 2024, the Legislative Assembly passed (with amendments) a motion to establish standing committees and stated calendar and financial year annual and financial reports stand referred to the relevant standing committee for inquiry and report by 12 May of the year after the presentation of the report to the Assembly pursuant to the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*.

The 2023-2024 Annual and Financial Reports were reviewed by the relevant Standing Committees, and each Committee held hearings and reported separately. The below Government Response addresses the recommendations within the report from the Standing Committee on Economics, Industry and Recreation.

During its inquiry the Standing Committee on Economics, Industry and Recreation was required to examine all or part of the following Annual and Financial reports for 2023–24:

- ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority
- ACT Gambling and Racing Commission
- Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD)
- Cultural Facilities Commission
- Long Service Leave Authority
- Office of the Work Health Safety Commissioner (WorkSafe ACT)

Standing Committee on Economics, Industry and Recreation – Report 1 - Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023-24

RECOMMENDATION	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (AGREED/AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE/EXISTING GOVERNMENT POLICY/NOTED/NOT AGREED)
Recommendation 1 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reports annually to the Assembly on the implementation and uptake of fee-free TAFE, including the gender breakdown of students in each course.	Existing Government Policy CIT has advised it reports on the update of fee-free TAFE in the CIT Annual Report. This includes the top fee-free TAFE courses and student demographic data for fee-free TAFE courses including the number of women enrolled.
Recommendation 2 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Skills, Training and Industrial Relations review commencements for apprentices and trainees released under NCVER data that shows a decrease in apprentice and trainee commencements in the ACT compared to increases in every other state and Territory, and report to the Assembly a plan to address this declining trend.	Noted The ACT will continue to fulfil its legislative responsibilities under the <i>Training and Tertiary Education Act 2003</i> to promote and educate the ACT community on the benefits of an Australian Apprenticeship pathway. The ACT has increased subsidies for some qualifications to ensure Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are able to maintain the capability and capacity to deliver high quality training and meet the local workforce demands. The ACT Government has recently announced a payment of \$250 to first year apprentices as a cost-of-living initiative that also help attract Canberrans to undertake an Australian Apprenticeship pathway. Other initiatives such as Skilled Capital and Free-TAFE provide training opportunities for eligible Canberrans that can lead to employment or further training opportunities such as Australian Apprenticeship pathways. Some factors relating to apprenticeship numbers are beyond the control of the ACT Government. The Australian Apprenticeship system is a demand driven system that relies on an employment arrangement between an employer and an apprentice or trainee, which is influenced by factors like

	labour market conditions and industrial settings. It is also impacted by the Australian Government incentive scheme.
Recommendation 3 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Skills, Training and Industrial Relations provide an update on construction and completion of the CIT Woden campus in their response to this report.	Agreed Construction works are essentially complete, with some outstanding works, systems commissioning and defects rectification ongoing. The focus has been on priority items to enable occupation of the building, and to complete disruptive works prior to more CIT staff moving into the building. The landscaping interface between the building and the Public Transport Interchange and the commissioning of new artwork will be delivered at a later date. The Certificate of Occupancy and Use for the CIT Building and Youth Foyer was granted on 22 May 2025, followed by Practical Completion being awarded to Lendlease on 4 June 2025. These facilities have been officially handed over to CIT, enabling the commencement of relocation activities, operational commissioning and the familiarisation phase prior to the commencement of teaching on 21 July 2025. CIT has commenced relocations of General Administration Staff into the building, with approximately 180 staff working from the Widen Campus as of 10 June 2025. Educators and Student Support Staff will relocate between 13 and 30 June 2025 to accommodate ongoing teaching at Reid until the end of Semester 1, 2025. Fencing will remain around the perimeter of the CIT building and Youth Foyer until mid-July 2025, to provide additional security while the buildings are not fully occupied. Temporary CCTV will also be installed, pending the final resolution of permanent CCTV. Removal of fencing around the Urban Realm will be reviewed following completion of outstanding works and rectification of defects, with the area to be opened to the public by mid-July 2025. The official opening ceremony for the CIT Woden Campus will be held on 17 July 2025.
Recommendation 4 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Skills, Training and Industrial Relations provide a report of current status,	Agreed Fyshwick is the main location of the CIT Trade Skills College, which delivers a range of courses including in the electrical, plumbing, and automotive fields. Information about CIT's various

safety and use of the Fyshwick facilities for the CIT and an overview of their current and future in their response to this report.	campuses including the course offerings and other activities at these campuses, as well as information regarding work health and safety, can be found in CIT's annual reports.
Recommendation 5 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Skills, Training and Industrial Relations as far as possible, provide an update on the progress of the issues surrounding the \$8.5 million contract to the 'complexity thinker' and the corporate governance of the board of CIT in the response to this report.	Agreed The CIT is a statutory authority with an independent governing board and remains committed to ensuring the good governance of CIT so that it may continue to provide world class training to the Canberra community. Since the issues came to light in 2022 significant work has been undertaken to strengthen CIT's governance, finance, and procurement processes. These include appointment of a new Board Chair and Deputy Chair for the CIT Board and new members. Establishing a Governance and Nominations Committee of the CIT Board and strengthening the financial delegations to impose greater expenditure limits on the CEO. This includes a requirement for procurements for goods and services over \$1 million and consultancies over \$500,000 to be approved by the Board. The ACT Integrity Commission released a Special Report on this matter in 2024, but their investigation continues. On 15 November 2024 the Supreme Court handed down the judgment in litigation brought by Redrouge Nominees Pty Ltd trading as Think Garden. The litigation sought to recover the remainder of the value of the contract signed in 2022. The Supreme Court found for the plaintiff and ordered CIT to pay the plaintiff \$2,402,002, which is less than the value of the contract.
Recommendation 6 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work to improve tertiary sector engagement and takes step to ensure that all six tertiary institutions say they are satisfied with the government's engagement.	Existing Government Policy The ACT Government will continue to work closely with tertiary education providers where possible to meet the needs of this sector.
Recommendation 7	Noted

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore options to increase the number of female identifying construction workers for subcontracts under \$1 million.	The ACT Government is committed to leveraging its purchasing power to achieve value for money outcomes, consistent with the ACT Government Procurement Framework, and to achieving important social outcomes including through the 'Diversity, Equality and Inclusion' procurement value. This recommendation will be considered as part of ongoing work to provide streamlined and practical guidance to Territory entities on the application of this procurement value, including in relation to contract terms with suppliers and, where relevant, subcontractors.
Recommendation 8 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to advocate to the Australian Government for a higher number of skilled migration visas for the ACT.	Existing Government Policy The ACT continues to advocate for an allocation of skilled migration visas to support the region's workforce needs and economic growth. The ACT Government submits annual requests to the Department of Home Affairs for an allocation of skilled migrant visas. The request is informed by analysis of the ACT's population trends, demographic shifts, skills shortages, and broader economic indicators. In most years, the number requested by the ACT is higher than the final allocation granted by the Department of Home Affairs.
Recommendation 9 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government inform the arts sector as soon as possible when they will receive the additional 25% plus CPI arts organisation funding and 50% plus CPI grant funding and how this will be distributed.	Agreed The 2025-26 ACT Budget included funding to increase arts activities funding by 50%. Any increase in ACT Government funding to arts organisation will be announced in the context of future Budgets. If a future budget were to provide increased funding, and a decision has been made with respect to distribution of that funding, the sector will be informed as soon as possible. Arts funding is delivered through relevant program guidelines which are communicated to the arts sector through artsACT's website, e-newsletter, social media and other Government communication channels.
Recommendation 10 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to explore options to employ locally based individuals in international film and television productions, particularly in non-acting roles.	Existing Government Policy The ACT Government will continue to invest in Screen Canberra, which plays a critical role in promoting the ACT as a place to produce screen content. These promotion and attraction activities support local practitioners and companies to develop capability and capacity.

Recommendation 11 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a plan for accessible arts and creative industries across Canberra.	Existing Government Policy The Arts, Culture and Creative Policy 2022-2026 and Action Plan commits to actions that support arts practices that reflect Canberra’s diverse community and create an environment that is inclusive, safe and welcoming to all. Outcomes of funding provided to arts organisations and arts projects are monitored to ensure that funding guidelines are responsive and continue to support arts and creative practice that is accessible across Canberra.
Recommendation 12 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure fees to hire government facilities include concessional rates so they are reasonably priced for the community.	Existing Government Policy There are 7 Government owned venues for hire, these venues range from workshops to halls. There are two applicable rates for the hiring of all Government owned venues including for: 1. Private companies and Government agencies– available as daily/hourly/weekend and week rates; and 2. Community Rate – reduced rate available to eligible community groups. The rates vary depending on the venue. The discounted rate for community is on average 35 per cent lower than the rate for private companies and Government agencies. To be eligible for the Community Rate, hirers must provide a copy of their ACT Certificate of Incorporation or Not-for-Profit registration at the time of placing the booking.
Recommendation 13 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to work with the Community Councils (or equivalent) to host annual community events in all of the districts.	Existing Government Policy The seven Community Councils in the ACT (Gungahlin, Belconnen, Inner North Canberra, Inner South Canberra, Tuggeranong, Weston Creek, Woden) receive funding from the ACT Government through an Annual Deed of Grant, with each Council receiving \$13,000. The ACT Government is moving to a regionalised approach to community engagement, which will allow further opportunities to engage with Community Councils in each region and encourage community events.

	CMTEDD can communicate with Community Councils to encourage them to use some of their allocated grant to host events in their region. The ACT Government can work with Councils to promote these activities.
Recommendation 14 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reports: • on their plan to restrict gambling advertising in the ACT, in their response to this report; and • annually to the Assembly on the results of their efforts, with a focus on online gambling.	Noted The government is continuing to explore options to restrict gambling advertising in the ACT. This issue involves an overlap with Australian Government responsibilities and has implications for a broad range of stakeholders. It also engages cross-border issues due to broadcast media in the ACT being shared across nearby NSW. Consequently, the government is still exploring a suitable policy response for implementation at a local level. All measures under the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering ('NCPF') have now been implemented, including those within the ACT's remit. Some measures are targeted at reducing harm risks associated with gambling advertising. The Australian Institute of Family Studies is currently undertaking an evaluation of the NCPF, the results of which will help inform future policy directions. The government will continue to update the Assembly on policy development activities through the Justice and Community Safety Directorate annual report.
Recommendation 15 The Committee recommends that any reform of the Gaming and Racing Commission does not reduce its independence.	Noted The government is not considering any reform to the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission which would reduce its independence.
Recommendation 16 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government inform the Committee which stakeholders were consulted in the development of the terms of reference for	Agreed The government, through the Minister for Gaming Reform, consulted Clubs ACT and the Canberra Alliance for Gambling Reform on draft terms of reference for the independent review of the ACT clubs sector.

the independent review of the ACT clubs sector in their response to this report.	
Recommendation 17 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table the full report of the independent review of the ACT clubs sector in the Assembly at the earliest opportunity.	Agreed The Government intends to publish the report of the independent inquiry into the future of ACT Clubs following appropriate consideration by Government.
Recommendation 18 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct financial due diligence regarding the current owners of Thoroughbred Park before entering into any potential joint venture for the redevelopment of the site, in light of Thoroughbred Park's financial deficits for the last three years.	Not agreed The Territory is not proposing to undertake any joint venture for the development of the site, therefore there is no need to undertake due diligence for a joint venture that is not proposed or being planned.
Recommendation 19 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review and publish the criteria to be utilised in investment decisions by the ACT's venture capital fund.	Agreed in-principle The Fund Licence has been published on the Contracts Register, which contains the Partnership Objectives at s7.1, which sets the objectives and governs the investment decisions on the Fund. The Territory will publish its Investment Plan and Responsible Investment Policy upon the launch of the Fund, as required under the Financial Management Investment Guidelines 2015. The Investment Plan and the Responsible Investment Policy set the policy and governance criteria for investments made by the Activate Capital Fund. The commercial criteria is the intellectual property of the Fund Manager, and will not be published.
Recommendation 20 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore options to improve the	Existing Government Policy

Canberra-Sydney rail link that see further reductions in travel time, and work with the NSW and Commonwealth Government to progress these works as soon as practical.	A Sydney – Canberra Rail Improvement Steering Committee has been established between the ACT and NSW Governments to investigate and report on potential improvements to the train service between Canberra and Sydney.
Recommendation 21 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the best long-term location for the Canberra railway station.	Existing Government Policy The East Lake Place Plan proposed maintaining the Canberra Railway Station within the current railway precinct in Kingston. The Place Plan proposes building a new integrated transport hub about a hundred metres to the east of the current building as part of a vibrant mixed use precinct. Discussions are underway with Transport for NSW, who run the train service and station, on commencing a collaborative Master Planning exercise and options analysis.
Recommendation 22 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider establishing a specific office or role(s) dedicated to progressing work in the Night-Time Economy portfolio.	Existing Government Policy A specific Night-Time Economy Ministerial portfolio has been created to drive and oversee night-time economy reforms.
Recommendation 23 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore the potential to expand the time that public transport operates to improve the night-time economy.	Existing Government Policy Transport Canberra continues to explore options for extending public transport hours, particularly on weekends to ensure safe and reliable travel for late night workers and patrons.
Recommendation 24 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government seek to partner with the Australian Government to increase its negotiating power when bidding for major international sporting events.	Noted While the ACT Government engages with the Australian Government on major event bids—such as the Rugby World Cup—the current model prioritises support for national sporting organisations in securing hosting rights, rather than endorsing individual bids from competing States and Territories.

Recommendation 25 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government: • undertake a comprehensive audit of indoor and outdoor sports facilities; • develop a plan for accessible sports and recreation across Canberra; and • develop a facilities management plan for transparent sports infrastructure investment.	Noted TCCS is currently undertaking an audit of all ACT Government sporting facilities currently under its remit. Forward planning of broader facilities maintenance is in train. A four-year road map (through until 2029) in relation to facility upgrades and investment will be developed. The ACT Government will consider the release of the road map in due course.
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