

Received 2 September 2014



Standing Committee on Public Accounts
committees@parliament.gov.au

2 September 2014

RE: Review of Auditor General's Report No. 4 of 2013: National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

Dear Mr Smyth, Ms Porter, Ms Lawder, and Ms Berry,

On behalf of the Youth Coalition of the ACT (the Youth Coalition), I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for the opportunity to provide input into the Committee's consideration of the Auditor General's Report No. 4 of 2013.

About the Youth Coalition of the ACT

The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the ACT. Comprised of 100 members, programs, and individuals, the Youth Coalition is responsible for representing and promoting the interests and wellbeing of young people aged 12 to 25 years, and those who work with them.

The activities of the Youth Coalition fall under four key themes: policy; sector development; advocacy and representation; and, projects that respond to ongoing and current issues. A key role of the Youth Coalition is the facilitation and development of strong linkages and collaboration between the community, government, and private sectors to achieve better outcomes for young people in the ACT.

Housing is a fundamental determinant of the wellbeing of young people and should be given extremely high importance in any government policy development. It is vital that the Committee considers the specific needs of young people as it considers the Auditor General's report.

Response to the Review of the Auditor General's Report

The Auditor General's report states that it has two objectives: an assessment of whether the ACT Government is meeting its obligations under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH); and, an assessment of whether this is making a difference for homeless people. The report closely considers the first objective, and provides reasonable recommendations to the Community Services Directorate regarding financial management and contract management.

However, the report does not adequately consider whether NPAH is making a difference for people who are homeless in the ACT. The Youth Coalition is concerned that by focusing on only three programs funded by NPAH in the ACT, the Auditor General's report is not able to effectively assess the impact of the services provided to people experiencing homelessness. The Youth Coalition is also concerned that the consultation process undertaken as part of the report has not adequately considered

the perspectives of service providers or service users. The recommendations contained in the report do not reflect measures to improve the quality or impact of services funded under NPAH.

When considering the impact of services funded under NPAH, the Youth Coalition also advocates for a consideration of the impact to the ACT community if the NPAH ceases at the end of its current 12 month extension.

We are aware that there have been only a small number of submissions to this inquiry. Therefore, the Youth Coalition wishes to offer further information and briefing to the Committee as you consider the Auditor General's report and we would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Committee in person.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this submission further. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Robertson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Emma Robertson
Director
Youth Coalition of the ACT

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