



Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021 **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by **LEANNE CASTLEY MLA:**

ACT Health Annual Report 2020-21, Southside hydrotherapy pool, p97, 98

In relation to:

Recommendation 73 of the Select Committee on Estimates 2018-19 was that the government work with Arthritis ACT and others to maintain appropriate and affordable hydrotherapy pools on the southside of Canberra following the closure of the Canberra Hospital rehab pool on Feb 29, 2020.

The Annual Report states that Arthritis ACT received an extra \$305k over three years for services at Aqua Harmony in Kambah. *(Have read that will mean extra 688 hydrotherapy sessions a year with two qualified instructors.)*

It also states that following the government's 2020 election commitment, \$250k has been allocated for the *"initial design, planning and costing work for a southside hydrotherapy pool"*. The preferred site is Lakeside Leisure Centre but Active Leisure Centre at the Erindale Group Centre will be investigated as a second option. On 3 December 2021, you issued a media release that an *"expert consultant"* had been engaged?

Questions:

1. When will the design, planning and costing be done?
2. When will work start and finish? What is the timeframe?
3. Can you give me an update on Arthritis ACT's arrangement with Aqua Harmony – when does their funding run out? Will they be funded for another three years?
4. You issued a media release entitled "Next steps for hydrotherapy in southside" on June 25, 2021 and the exact same release, from you, was released a second time on December 3 last year. Why did you release the same media release twice in six months? How often do you issue the same media release at different times?

RACHEL STEPHEN-SMITH MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. Preliminary costing for the design and construction of a new southside hydrotherapy pool, and future operational costs have been prepared and are the subject of consideration of an infrastructure business case in the 2022-23 Budget. Further work on the design will commence once the outcome of the 2022-23 Budget is known.
2. The ACT Government has already commenced the initial design, planning and costing work for the development of a hydrotherapy pool. This has included consultation with stakeholders on the initial design and operation of any new facility. Subject to funding in the 2022-23 Budget, it is expected that any new southside hydrotherapy facility would be completed in 2024.
3. The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) provided additional funding to the Arthritis Foundation of the ACT to help facilitate client access to hydrotherapy sessions at Aqua Harmony, Kambah ACT, from 29 February 2020 to 30 June 2022. An extension of this additional funding is currently under consideration, with a decision to be provided prior to the contract end date.
4. This media release was not issued a second time. However, an error in the entry of metadata on the Open Government website appears to have resulted in the media release issued 25 June 2021 incorrectly displaying an issue date of 3 December 2021. This has been corrected on the website and is available here: [Next steps for hydrotherapy in southside - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate \(act.gov.au\)](#).

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature:



Date:

22/3/22

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith