



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Children, Youth and Families

Redirected to: Chief Minister

Reference: HCSD - Community Services Directorate Annual Report 2024-25

Hearing: 12/11/2025

In relation to: Life Course Data Initiative Pilot

Question received: 14/11/2025

Answer Due: 27/11/2025

The four-year Life Course Data Initiative Pilot is about half way through.

- (1) What has been achieved over the last two years.
- (2) What is the status of this project, and its next steps.

Andrew Barr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

LCDI achievements to date?

In January 2024, the Commonwealth selected the ACT, along with South Australia, as the preferred pilot jurisdiction for the Life Course Data Initiative (LCDI). This initiative is a \$16.4m component of the Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage Package, funded by the Australian Government. Progress of the LCDI is regularly reported to the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, co-chaired by the Commonwealth Assistant Treasurer and by the Australian Statistician.

With the assistance of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the LCDI is linking ACT (and SA) administrative data to Australian Government administrative data through the *Person Level Integrated Data Asset* (PLIDA). The linkage focusses on multiple ACT datasets for the 0-14 age cohort (and their families), born between 2006/2007, and 2023 and will enable research and the development of new policies and more effective interventions for individuals and families enduring, or at risk of falling into entrenched disadvantage.

The initial achievement of the LCDI partners has been the resolution of the complex legal, data governance, administrative and ethical issues that are associated with the assembly and use of large, longitudinal, multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional datasets.

This process has included the establishment of MOU between the ABS and the ACT, the establishment of a governance structure that includes all three jurisdictions (with the ABS supplemented by Commonwealth Treasury and the Department of Social Services), establishment of formal research partnerships and a number of other administrative mechanisms.

Once the broad, umbrella, legal and ethical approval was received for ACT administrative data to be linked to Commonwealth administrative data to create the LCDI data asset, ACT data custodians transferred the relevant ACT data to the ABS to be linked. By July 2025 ACT Education data had been linked with a success rate of approximately 95%. In September 2025 the ACT Health data was successfully linked, with a linkage rate of approximately 96%. South Australian data was linked following the completion of the ACT data linkage.

The establishment of the LCDI included an ACT Government commitment to undertake a significant research project using the linked LCDI data. Through an existing ACT/ANU strategic wellbeing research partnership, the ANU agreed to undertake the research on behalf of the ACT. The ACT research proposal was accepted by the LCDI governing committee and will explore factors that contribute to entrenched disadvantage to identify a set of predictors of exit from (or persistence in) a state of entrenched disadvantage.

Following the linkage of the ACT and Commonwealth data, the ANU researchers have now gained access to the Commonwealth data as the first step to undertaking this research.

What is the status of this project, and its next steps?

The status of the LCDI project is that it has successfully piloted the linkage of large, complex, longitudinal, datasets from jurisdictions and from the Commonwealth. The LCDI has also successfully piloted the necessary legal, data governance, administrative and ethical issues involved in creating the linked data asset. The current status also includes the commencement of jurisdictional research projects using LCDI data.

The complexity and sensitivity of the data that comprise the LCDI require each specific research task to obtain specific ethics clearance. The next steps for the LCDI include the completion of the research project being undertaken on behalf of the ACT by the ANU, along with a research project commissioned by South Australia and being undertaken by the University of Adelaide.

The ACT project must be completed by end June 2027 and is currently on track. An additional ACT analytical project has been designed and will be brought forward for consideration by the LCDI steering committee in 2026.

In addition to the ACT and South Australian research projects, the ABS has committed to undertake the development of what is described as a statistically descriptive product using LCDI data. Additionally, a non-government research organisation has been approved to undertake a research project using LCDI data.

The LCDI has been a prompt for the development of new methodologies by the ABS that can be applied to large, linked, datasets. To that end the ABS will publish two methodological articles in December 2025 as part of the LCDI. The articles will outline two methodological approaches being used to support analysis in the Life Course Dataset.

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In February 2026, the ABS will release further products as part of the LCDI, these will include:

- A new interactive map and dashboard that includes distance and drive times to a range of services, such as GPs, childcare, schools, hospitals.
- An article about children in households' distance to services.
- An article of advantaged and disadvantaged households with children, using data from the Index for Household Advantage and Disadvantage (IHAD)

ABS access to the SA and ACT data is needed to enable production of valuable and useful outputs during the pilot LCDI. Joint planning on designing these outputs will commence early in 2026.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature: 

Date: **5.12.25**

By the Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA