

2013

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

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES
(7th ASSEMBLY)
REPORT NO 7**

REPORT ON ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2010-2011

**Presented by
Ms Katy Gallagher MLA
Chief Minister**

Government Response

Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services (7th Assembly) Report No 6 –
Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2010-2011

Introduction

The Annual Reports of All ACT Government agencies are referred to the Standing Committees of the ACT Legislative Assembly for examination and report.

The Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services (7th Assembly) reviewed annual reports for:

- Health Directorate; and
- Community Services Directorate.

The Committee made 16 recommendations.

Response to Committee Recommendations

Recommendation 1

2.10 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health provide an update on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and possible ramifications for the Territory, to the Committee prior to the first Assembly sitting day in August 2012.

Government Response

Agreed.

On 25 July 2012, the Prime Minister announced the Commonwealth had reached in-principle agreement with the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia, and Tasmania for the launch of an NDIS to commence from July 2013.

The ACT launch will address unmet and undermet need in the community by providing a fairer approach to funding for specialist disability care and supports. It means that more people with disability in the ACT will receive funding and determine which service they wish to purchase. The ACT Government's closeness to the community, strong relationship with community partners, mature human rights framework and experience in supporting people through Individual Support Packages make the ACT an ideal trial location.

On 2 August 2012, the Minister for Community Services announced the membership of an Expert Panel of people with disability, families, carers, the sector and government that will focus on preparing the ACT community for an NDIS. This group is working with an ACT Government taskforce, to consider this significant social reform.

The taskforce is planning the roll-out of the NDIS and will carefully plan the next steps in close working relationship with the national launch agency and the ACT non-government community sector and people with disability and their families and carers.

Recommendation 2

2.11 The Committee recommends that the progress and operation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme become a standing item in the Health Directorate's Annual Report as the scheme develops.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Community Services Directorate 2011-12 Annual Report included progress of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Recommendation 3

2.17 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health provide an update on the development of the workforce retention strategy during the forthcoming Estimates process.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Workforce Plan for the Health Workforce of the ACT 2012-2017 Discussion Paper was made publically available on 21 June 2012. The Discussion Paper collates key national and local workforce issues and considers strategies that may help to resolve or improve these issues and will be used to inform the development of the Workforce Plan for the Health Workforce of the ACT for the period 2012-2017. The paper can be located at:

<http://health.act.gov.au/professionals/workforce-planning/workforce-plan/workforce-plan-discussion-document>

Recommendation 4

3.12 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Community Services provide an update to the Committee, prior to the first Assembly sitting day in August 2012, on the development of a client satisfaction survey.

Government Response

Agreed.

In 2011, a randomly selected sample of 200 clients of Disability ACT provided with services, participated in a client satisfaction survey. Two hundred surveys were mailed to clients or their guardians. There was a 70% satisfaction rate with current service provision. This information was published in the 2010-11 Annual Report.

In 2012, a client satisfaction survey was sent to all people with disability who receive services funded or provided by Disability ACT. The survey concluded at the end of July 2012. Available information indicates approximately 1800 client satisfaction surveys were disseminated through service providers and initial analysis of data indicated a satisfaction rate of 76% with support services. The satisfaction rate was published in the Community Services Directorate 2011-12 Annual Report.

Recommendation 5

3.13 The Committee recommends that the Community Services Directorate provide details regarding any broad client survey conducted in its Annual Reports, and include results from any survey taken within the year in its Annual Reports.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Community Services Directorate presently reports on all of the satisfaction surveys undertaken by the Directorate Community Services Directorate in its Annual Reports, under Consultation and Scrutiny Reporting.

Recommendation 6

3.21 The Committee recommends the funding for Quality of Life Grants be reviewed with a view to increasing the grants per recipient in real terms including examining the grants per recipient and the length of time people receive grants.

Government Response

Noted.

The 2012-13 Quality of Life Grants pool was increased from \$324,000 in 2011-12 to \$500,000. Disability ACT received 361 applications with a total funding request of nearly \$1.1 m (9.5 per cent increase funding request of \$1.004 m from 2011-12). The grants were announced in late July 2012.

Recommendation 7

3.26 The Committee recommends that in future the Minister for Community Services ensure proper consultation is conducted with all schools, with a marked improvement in the transparency of the approach, and that details be reported in future Annual Reports.

Government Response

Noted.

The Community Services Directorate reported on consultations undertaken during the reporting year in the Community Services Directorate 2011-12 Annual Report.

In relation to consultation with schools through the scoping study completed by Courage Partners; the Education and Training Directorate and Principals of each school which supports large numbers of students with a disability were consulted.

Families of Woden School students were provided with the same opportunities as other school communities to contribute to the study. The Scoping study by Courage Partners indicates a parent of a student at Black Mountain School initiated the survey of Black Mountain School families and provided information to Courage Partners. This particular survey was not initiated by Disability ACT, nor Courage Partners.

Consultations undertaken were published in the 2010-11 Community Services Directorate Annual Report under Community Engagement (page 161). Individual consultations and 4 workshops resulted in over 160 people reported as being consulted.

The Committee recommends greater transparency in the approach to consultation and in future consultations Disability ACT will endeavour to provide increased transparency.

Recommendation 8

3.32 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Community Services provide an update on recent developments in relation to the provision of a nurse at the Woden School, including measures to prevent teachers from providing health care to students, and recent stakeholder discussions in the upcoming Estimates process.

Government Response

Agreed.

Discussions between the ACT Health Directorate and the Education and Training Directorate have resulted in jointly funded Registered Nurse led care at The Woden School to support a specific student with additional health care requirements. Nursing support is either direct to the student or indirect through delegation of care to a Health Care Support Worker. The funding arrangement expired at the end of 2012. Sustainability of this health care from 2013 onwards is a priority for both Directorates. In addition, this funding is supporting both Directorates in undertaking a strategic project to make recommendations for a new model for supporting students with complex health care needs in ACT public schools. The desired outcome is students with complex medical needs will be able to attend school and be included in all school activities.

Recommendation 9

3.33 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Community Services reassess the Directorate's current community consultation practices, particularly those in relation to parents of children at special schools, to ensure that they comply with the Community Engagement Guide and international best practice models in relation to communicating with Carers. The Minister should report to the Committee before the first Assembly sitting day in August 2012 on the Directorate's progress concerning the reassessment.

Government Response

Noted.

Disability ACT currently complies with the Community Engagement Guide as it provides notice of consultation and a range of opportunities to contribute to specific areas of interest. In relation to the Scoping Study for After School and Vacation Care the consultants provided a methodology for consulting and engaged in group consultations, focus groups and one on one interviews with a broad variety of stakeholders including families and carers. People who contributed to the consultation include members representing the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association, peak bodies, parents and family members, service providers and the Office of the Public Advocate.

Recommendation 10

3.37 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Community Services ensure that a survey of outcomes and pathways for those referred to House with No Steps is undertaken annually and those results are included in the Directorate's Annual Report.

Government Response

Noted.

The Community Services Directorate requires, as part of the Transition Service Funding Agreement, that House with No Steps report on new and unmet needs, system issues, service gaps, innovation in service delivery and suggestions for policy change. This information is provided in Governance Group meetings held twice each year and in information provided in performance reports.

House with No Steps will be required to undertake an annual survey of outcomes and pathways for those referred to the Transition Program and report the results of the survey in its 2012 13 Annual Report.

The Community Services Directorate has also commenced the procurement process to retender the Transition Program by early 2013.

Recommendation 11

3.41 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Community Services provide an update on the ACT response to the Fair Work Australia decision in the upcoming Estimates process.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Minister for Community Services provided detailed updates on the Fair Work Australia decision through responses to Questions on Notice E12-376 and Question Taken on Notice E12-370 to the Select Committee on Estimates 2012-13.

Recommendation 12

3.52 The Committee recommends that the Community Services Directorate Annual Report includes data from First Point, including the number of people not provided with accommodation upon contacting First Point.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Community Services Directorate included data from First Point in the Community Services Directorate 2011-12 Annual Report. First point is able to provide data about the number of people provided with accommodation upon contacting First Point, and the number of people referred to other non-accommodation services. Where a request for accommodation cannot be immediately filled, those requesting the assistance are not "turned away", but rather are placed in a waiting list for assistance. They may receive other assistance while they are waiting and their housing needs may be resolved by other means (including entry to social or private housing).

Recommendation 13

3.53 The Committee recommends community organisations be provided with data from First Point on a regular basis.

Government Response**Noted.**

Since January 2012, First Point has contributed to the Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) Collection on a monthly basis. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) release quarterly data. Community Organisations have access to the SHS Collection reports.

Recommendation 14

3.58 The Committee recommends that the Older Persons Assembly become a regular event, with the timing to be determined in consultation with the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing.

Government Response**Agreed.**

Following the Older Persons Assembly in September 2011, the Minister for Ageing stated she would like to see a similar Older Persons Assembly being held at least once during every 4 year electoral cycle. The Office for Ageing is currently planning for the next Assembly to be held in 2013 with a second Older Persons Assembly proposed for 2015. The Office for Ageing will ensure the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing is consulted and involved in the Assembly's planning, implementation and evaluation.

Recommendation 15

3.62 The Committee recommends that the Office of Multicultural Affairs examines current communication methods between themselves and the Education Directorate in order to ensure that vital information, required for the correct operation of programs, is not falling through gaps. The Minister should report to the Committee before the first sitting day in August 2012 on the Office's progress concerning the examination.

Government Response**Noted.**

The Office for Multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs is establishing an Inter-Directorate Working Group on Multicultural Affairs. The Working Group will champion whole of government responses to the shared issues facing the Multicultural community in the ACT, such as employment, health and education.

Recommendation 16

3.66 The Committee recommends that the ACT Office of Women be responsible for the accurate and timely collection and analysis of data on return to work grant recipients. The Committee recommends that collected data be included in the Directorate's Annual Reports.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Office for Women will analyse the data on return to work grant recipients and include in the Community Services Directorate Annual Reports.