



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by Mr CAIN on 17 July 2023: Ms Anke van der Sterren of ATODA took on notice the following question(s):

Ref: Uncorrected Proof Hansard Transcript 17/7/23 PAGE 16

In relation to: Drug and alcohol services - the decriminalisation of possession of small quantities of hard drugs - any government programs or new government approaches - anything that is set up or about to be set up - is there anything that you are aware of that is being shaped right now? [your awareness as a peak body in this area]

MR CAIN: Are you aware of anything that is set up or about to be set up, like, now, as opposed to the law becoming live and then, as you said, see how it goes?

Ms van der Sterren: Do you mean drug and alcohol services themselves?

MR CAIN: Yes. From the government. Any government programs or new government approaches, is there anything that you are aware of that is being shaped right now?

Ms Van der Sterren: I know that drug and alcohol services are, you know, are continuing to be involved and consulted with in terms of how that will be implemented. I am not certain of any specific additional support or funding, but I can get back to you about that. I can take that on notice and get back to you on that.

Ms Anke van der Sterren (ATODA): The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

ATODA is a member of the ACT Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Act 2022 Implementation Group, which is convened by the ACT Health Directorate and includes representatives from ACT Policing, Justice and Community Safety Directorate and Canberra Health Services. The role of this group is to advise the ACT Government on the implementation of the Act, and ATODA appreciates having input into those discussions.

ATODA is mindful that the commissioning of ATOD services in the ACT is intended to ensure that needs are identified and addressed through a comprehensive service system. A timely and genuinely co-designed commissioning process is critical given upcoming implementation of decriminalisation which has the potential to impact the treatment and harm reduction sector.

Decriminalization may increase diversion to the Illicit Drug Diversion Program, through which an intervention is provided by the Alcohol and Drug Service, Canberra Health Services. ATODA is aware that Canberra Health Services have recruited an additional AOD counsellor to support this program.

ATODA is also aware of ongoing work in relation to communications ahead of implementation of the Act.

ATODA welcomes the funding announced in the 2023-24 Budget for an evaluation of the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Act 2022. This evaluation should consider the implementation process.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature: 

Date: 31 August 2023

By the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Ms Anke van der Sterren