



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2022-2023

Mr James Milligan MLA (Chair), Mr Andrew Braddock MLA (Deputy Chair),
Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by Elizabeth Kikkert MLA on 1 September 2022: ACT Human Rights President, Dr Helen Watchirs took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 1 September 2022 [PAGE 1104]]

In relation to:

Q 321: Blueprint for change oversight committee – was the issue of sentenced and unsentenced detainees incarcerated together brought up as an issue?

Dr Helen Watchirs: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

The specific issue of detaining sentenced and unsentenced detainees together was considered in the Blueprint Committee process in the context of accommodation challenges. There was a recognition that the complexity of accommodation considerations has an impact on detainee tension and subsequently, staff working conditions. The Human Rights Commission further recognises that humane conditions of detention for detainees are inherently important, and also impact on staff working conditions.

The Report found in relation to accommodation pressures that there was an impact due to required non-associations between detainees, and stated at page 28 that:

The most pressing of the issues arising from this situation is housing sentenced detainees with those on remand and the limited accommodation options for female detainees. A new facility or facilities would enable many of the above issues to be addressed through separate specialist facilities rather than the current insufficient solution.'

Recommendation 8 committed to exploring options to reduce detainee overcrowding, and considering accommodation solutions as part of the JACS master planning process, with an Outcome of 'Detainees are accommodated safely and in accordance with their human rights'.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023

Signature:

Date: 7 September 2022

By the ACT Human Rights President, Dr Helen Watchirs