



Inquiry into the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Treasurer

In relation to: How many employees in the public sector in future years?

Hearing: 05 March 2026

Received: 13 March 2026

Answer Due: 20 March 2026

The Auditor-General noted that average fulltime employees within the ACT Public Service was 24,689 in 2021 and was 30,245 in June 2025 and noted current enterprise agreement processes. The Government is predicting that moving forwards, growth in employee expenses will be limited.

- a) What is the ACT Government's modelled size of average fulltime employees within the public sector for June 2026, June 2027 and June 2028?
- b) What investment is the ACT Public Service making in workforce capability to ensure that community needs are met by this modelled staffing complement with a growing population and how is it benchmarking workforce productivity against other Australian and comparable overseas jurisdictions?

MR CHRIS STEEL MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- a) The budgeted number of FTE for 2025-26 is 30,021 (2025-26 Budget Outlook, p.318). Estimates for FTE levels in 2026-27 will be published in the 2026-27 Budget. Forward year budget estimates, most recently published as part of the 2025-26 Budget Review, include forecast employee and superannuation expenses through to 2028-29. Given each Directorate or Agency is responsible for managing to their budgets, and noting that recruitment rates, organisation structures and work levels, including workloads are continually subject to decision-making, there are no specific year-by-year forecasts published in the Budget.
- b) The ACT Public Service (ACTPS) is investing in building system wide capability, strengthening leadership, and enabling productivity through common platforms and shared approaches.

We have recently invested in an ACTPS Learning Management System (LMS) as a key enabler to strengthen workforce capability. The LMS provides a consistent, whole of government platform to deliver and track priority and mandatory learning, support onboarding and

induction, and provide visibility of learning investment and participation. It enables evidence-based decision making by identifying capability gaps, monitoring take up, and supporting accountability for workforce capability uplift across directorates. The LMS and the refreshed ACTPS Learning Strategy strengthens consistency, reduces duplication, and improves the return on learning investment, including benefits for the whole of service.

Targeted investment is also being made in leadership capability at all levels, recognising its critical role in workforce productivity, effective service delivery and organisational resilience. This includes structured SES induction and development focused on decision making, adaptive leadership, and operating confidently within legislative and governance frameworks.

The ACT Government is also strengthening workforce capability to meet emerging legislative and community expectations. From 1 July 2026, amendments under the Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation require SES and statutory office holders to uphold to report annually on implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Whole of service learning and capability uplift supports these obligations and ensures staff have the skills and cultural competence required to deliver equitable outcomes for First Nations peoples.

The ACTPS approach, as reflected in the State of the Service Report, emphasises productivity through capability development, leadership, technology and operating model reform.

Within the ACTPS, workforce planning and assessments of productivity are undertaken by directorates in line with their legislative functions and service delivery responsibilities. Directorate may draw on comparative data from other Australian jurisdictions, as well as established national and interjurisdictional data sources to understand workforce composition, service delivery models and productivity trends and inform decisions.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Signature: 
By the Treasurer, Chris Steel MLA

Date:

31/3/26