QON No. 008

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Select Committee on Estimates 2026–2027

Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Chiaka Barry

Addressed to: YWCA – Frances Crimmins (CEO)

Redirected to:

Reference: 2026-27 Budget Estimates – Community Day

Hearing: 3 July 2026
In relation to: Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
Question received: 20/07/2026
Answer Due: 28/07/2026

Your budget submission noted that sector staff feel compelled to transition into more sustainable jobs, owing to funding uncertainty.

(1) Has the ACT Government's Safer Families Levy funding translated into greater job security for domestic violence service experts?

(2) If not, how could the administration of that funding be improved to support staff retention for frontline domestic violence service providers?

(3) What patterns do you see across the family violence service sector more broadly, on the issue of staff retention and is the ACT Government adequately supporting the sector to address this issue?

[Ms Crimmins]: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The Safer Families Levy was originally introduced on 1 July 2016 to provide community support and to raise awareness of domestic and family violence in the ACT community. Since the 2024-2025 Budget, transparency regarding the use of the Levy has improved and it no longer funds government administrative costs and overheads. This progress was welcomed by YWCA Canberra.

YWCA Canberra has consistently raised short-term contracting as a key driver of workplace uncertainty. In this regard, our Budget submission called on the ACT Government to ensure contract renewals are administered so as to provide security to the workforce and to clients. In lieu of longer term funding envelopes, services were facing an annual funding cliffs that would arise typically in the few weeks between the release of the ACT Budget and the end of the financial year, creating immense pressure on services and staff to seek clarity on program continuation.

The 20265-2027 Budget addresses some of the funding cliffs that have affected the domestic and family violence sector. There remains some misalignment however between the duration of separate funding contract between complementary programs, such as our domestic violence support service and the specialist children's service which complements it and provides support for children who arrive to our service with their protective parent.

Where these funding cliffs are evident, YWCA manages them through in-house contingencies to ensure that if funding is not continued in the period between budget and the end of financial year that staff can have a window of security or they are reallocated to other programs. We have extensive planning in place to shield staff from unexpected shocks derived from funding. However, this does not mitigate against the issues that may arise when someone moves on from a position when there is only a few months left on the contract. It becomes very hard to recruit for when we need to backfill.

Overwhelmingly, the issues with recruitment and retention we encounter in in our Domestic Violence Support Service are with persistent demand and high workloads, if not managed, may lead to worker burnout, vicarious trauma. Pay inequity between the community services sector and the public service is the largest retention issue.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates

Signature:
Date: 28 July 2026

By the [Commissioner for/Officer……], [name of Commissioner/Official]