

**2020**

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

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE  
INTERIM REPORT 3**

**Presented by  
Andrew Barr MLA  
Chief Minister  
August 2020**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Government would like to thank members of the community and community groups who have provided submissions or evidence to the Committee.

The Government would also like to note that some responses which are noted or agreed in principle are contingent on future Government funding decisions.

## **OVERARCHING ACT GOVERNMENT COMMENTS**

### **ACT Government response to the Standing Committee Interim Reports 1 and 2**

The ACT Government tabled its response to the Select Committee's first interim report in the Legislative Assembly on 4 June 2020 and second interim report on 2 July 2020.

The Government's response to the first interim report agreed to 12 recommendations, agreed in principle to two recommendations and noted ten recommendations. The Government's response to the second interim report agreed to three recommendations, agreed in principle to three recommendations and noted 7 recommendations.

### **COVID-19 situation in Victoria and NSW**

In response to the escalating COVID-19 situation in Victoria, a new Public Health Direction came into effect at 7:00am on Friday 3 July 2020. This Direction has been revised as the situation in Victoria has continued to evolve:

- From 7:00am on Friday 3 July 2020 anyone who enters the ACT, and has been in a COVID-19 hotspot in Victoria (as defined at the time of their entry to the ACT), is required to quarantine in the ACT until 14 days after leaving the hotspot, or return to their home jurisdiction at the earliest reasonable opportunity.
- From 11:59pm on Monday 6 July 2020 anyone who enters the ACT, and has been in the greater Melbourne metropolitan area, is required to quarantine in the ACT until 14 days after leaving Melbourne, or return to their home jurisdiction at the earliest reasonable opportunity.
- From 12:01am on Wednesday 8 July 2020 anyone (other than ACT residents) travelling into the ACT from Victoria will be denied entry unless they are granted an exemption. ACT residents will be able to return home, but they will be required to enter quarantine until 14 days after leaving Victoria, and must notify ACT Health of their intention to return.

In response to some COVID-19 outbreaks in NSW, as at 12 noon on Monday 20 July 2020 a new Public Health Direction came into effect in the ACT legally requiring anyone who has visited specific NSW venues on specific dates to self-quarantine for 14 days from the date

they were there, even if they do not have any symptoms. Those NSW venues are identified on the [ACT Government's COVID-19 website](#).<sup>1</sup>

### **COVID-19 Cases in the ACT**

As at 11 August 2020, there have been 113 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the ACT with 110 recovered, three deaths recorded and no active cases. The last confirmed case in the ACT was recorded on 10 July 2020.

ACT Government measures and early action through the National Cabinet have, so far, proved highly successful in containing the outbreak of COVID-19 in the ACT. This success has allowed the ACT to begin gradually easing COVID-19 restrictions. In line with Canberra's *Recovery Plan: Easing of Restrictions*, Step 3.1 restrictions are currently in place. This came into effect at 9am on Monday 10 August. Further information on the easing of COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing requirements that remain in place can be found at the [ACT Government's COVID-19 website](#).<sup>2</sup>

### **COVID-19 Easing of Restrictions Roadmap**

The ACT Government continues its approach toward easing of restrictions following ['Canberra's Recovery Plan: Easing of Restrictions Roadmap'](#).<sup>3</sup> The ACT progressed to Step 2.2 from 19 June 2020.

Key changes in this stage include:

- There is no limit on household visitation.
- All public gatherings (except for the hospitality sector) will be set at one person per 4 square metres for each indoor and outdoor space, up to a maximum of 100 people (including staff, trainers and spectators).
- For the hospitality sector (cafés, restaurants, bars, pubs and clubs) gatherings will be set at 100 patrons for each indoor or outdoor space, or one person per 4 square metres, whichever is lesser. This limit excludes staff.
- Bars, pubs, and clubs will be able to serve patrons alcohol in groups of up to 10 patrons per booking or table without serving a meal. Patrons are to be seated.
- The following are open, observing the one per 4 square metre rule for up to 100 people (including staff) per indoor or outdoor space:
  - Cinemas and movie theatres;
  - Open air drive-in cinemas (max. 100 vehicles);
  - Indoor amusement centres, arcades, outdoor and indoor play centres;
  - Betting agencies;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/community/travel/nsw>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/resources/canberra-recovery-plan>

- Gyms, health clubs, fitness or wellness centres, yoga, barre, pilates and spin facilities, boot camps and personal training;
- Swimming pools;
- Community sport and organised sporting activities;
- Outdoor amusements and attractions;
- Dance classes;
- Choirs, bands and orchestras;
- Weddings and funerals;
- Personal services (beauty and nail salons, tattoo and body modification, tanning, waxing, spa and massage parlours);
- Community and youth centres;
- Caravan parks, campgrounds and camp sites;
- Places of worship and religious ceremonies; and
- Galleries, museums, national institutions, historic sites and libraries (in addition to one person per 4 square metres throughout the venue, organised tour groups of up to 20 people (excluding staff) are allowed).

From 9am on Monday 10 August 2020 the ACT progressed to Step 3.1 of [Canberra's Recovery Plan: Easing of Restrictions Roadmap](#). This step includes minor and cautious changes to COVID-19 restrictions in the ACT for some sectors that have been closed since March. Under Step 3.1 food courts (dine-in), casinos and gaming in clubs, steam-based services including saunas, steam rooms, steam cabinets and bathhouses, and strip clubs, brothels and escort agencies can open.

In addition, the following will apply:

- Community sport activities can have a maximum of 100 spectators for each indoor and each outdoor space, where the one person per 4 square metre rule can be observed. This excludes staff and participants.
- Bar, pubs and clubs are able to continue to serve alcohol to seated patrons, with no limit on the size of group bookings.
- When gyms, health clubs and fitness facilities are unstaffed, a maximum of 25 patrons are permitted to be in the venue at any one time.
- All venues, facilities and businesses must clearly display occupancy allowance at entrance to each venue or space.
- Venues, facilities and businesses which can now reopen must develop and follow a COVID Safety Plan.

Under Step 3.1 all requirements under Step 2.2 remain in place, in particular:

- No limit on household visits.
- The limit on the number of people allowed at outdoor gatherings remains at 100 people.

- The current arrangements of one person per 4 square metres of usable space rule applies, up to 100 people in each indoor and each outdoor space. This excludes any staff on premises.

### **Community Recovery Roadmap**

Working with our community partners, the ACT Government has responded immediately to deliver practical and meaningful support to Canberrans whose wellbeing has been affected by smoke, bushfires, hail and now COVID-19. The Community Recovery Roadmap outlines the stages of recovery to build back Canberra's resilience as a community in light of these events and to withstand any future challenges.

The Community Recovery Roadmap sets out three phases for the ACT's community recovery. Phase 1, *Immediate Community Sector Responses*; Phase 2 *Establishing a Foundation for Recovery* and, Phase 3 *Building Resilience into the Future*.

Now in Phase 2, the ACT Government will continue to engage with the community and the community sector to respond to the needs of those most impacted and deliver on a vision for a connected, inclusive and valued community. This engagement will inform Phase 3 of the Roadmap. The Community Recovery Roadmap is available on the [covid.act.gov.au](https://covid.act.gov.au) website.<sup>4</sup>

### **Support for artists and arts organisations in the ACT**

In response to COVID-19 the ACT Government has provided \$2 million in additional funding to artists and arts organisations through HOMEFRONT Grants, arts organisation support and rent relief.

This support includes:

- a \$500,000 HOMEFRONT grants program for individual Canberra-based artists (up to \$10,000 per applicant) to support arts development and the sustainability of their arts practices over the next six to nine months;
- \$359,265 in funding to the head-licensees of arts facilities to enable the waiving of fees for sub-licensees for six months. This funding has supported up to 65 smaller arts organisations and individual artists; and
- an investment of \$1.07 million in Canberra arts organisations that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nine Key Arts and Program organisations have received funding through this program.

The ACT Government is also providing support for economic recovery through Events ACT, Visit Canberra and Industry and Investment and Innovation. This support includes:

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/1560912/CV\\_Community-Recovery-Plan\\_Wellbeing\\_Accessible.pdf](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1560912/CV_Community-Recovery-Plan_Wellbeing_Accessible.pdf)

- Adapting and continuing events activity and establishing the RISE Canberra program to support the events industry through the pandemic;
- \$607,000 to the CBR Innovation Network to expand the Innovation Connect grant program and deliver initiatives to support local entrepreneurs to help boost our economy's recovery; and
- \$250,000 COVID-19 MADE IN CBR program through the CBR Screen Fund for ACT screen professionals whose work has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Mental Health report at each remaining sitting of the Ninth Assembly on the occupancy rate for acute mental health beds.

#### Noted

It would be an unreasonable diversion of resources to, in effect, report weekly for the remainder of the Ninth Assembly on acute mental health bed occupancy in the ACT.

The occupancy rate for mental health beds illustrates how many patients are admitted in a bed at a point in time. As such, its usefulness as a measure of capacity is limited. Mental health beds are managed on a system-wide basis across Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce and coordinated by the Territory Wide flow coordinator. A triage process is used to prioritise admissions from the Emergency Departments (ED) of both Canberra and Calvary Hospitals, other inpatient wards in both hospitals, transfers from other facilities and admissions from the community. There are admissions accommodated and discharges facilitated on a daily basis to ensure that patients are able to be provided care in the most appropriate setting. This includes coordination of community-based supports and transfers between settings. Therefore, capacity needs to be measured through a variety of measures across the system.

A range of strategies have been implemented over the past 12 months to provide supports in community and divert presentations from the ED. These strategies include the introduction of the Police, Ambulance, Clinical Emergency Response (PACER) Team seven days per week, and more recently planning for Safe Haven cafes to provide a safe alternative to the ED. Barriers to discharge are being addressed through a further investment in the Home Assessment and Acute Response Team to provide supported discharge for patients across both inpatient sites and a partnership with the Mental Health Foundation for transitional accommodation post discharge – both funded through the \$4.5 million Mental Health Support Package.

Later this year, two further supported accommodation houses will be commissioned along with a six bed southside Step-Up Step-Down unit which will provide more community-based accommodation for people with enduring mental illness.

## **Recommendation 2**

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health at each remaining sitting of the Ninth Assembly, update the Assembly and the community on the backlog of elective surgery, including a breakdown by specialty and how the government intends to clear the backlog.

### **Noted**

The ACT Government has announced \$30 million in funding for 2020-21 to deliver:

- Up to 2000 additional elective surgeries;
- 14,000 additional specialist outpatient appointments;
- Up to 679 additional endoscopy procedures;
- Targeted school checks for kindergarten children, focusing on hearing and vision;
- 2600 child development checks through Maternal and Child Health (MACH) Clinic; and
- Up to 1900 dental appointments, targeting people with special needs, children and vulnerable community groups.

The ACT Government publishes quarterly performance reports, which detail activity in the Territory's public hospital system. The Quarter 4 2019-20 report will be published in September 2020. Subsequent reporting will include quarterly progress updates on the number of elective surgeries in the ACT.

Officials have responded to the Committee's questions about the investment in elective surgery in some detail and taken further questions on notice. There would be little value in reporting weekly for three weeks on a program that will be delivered over a full year.

## **Recommendation 3**

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health at each remaining sitting of the Ninth Assembly, update the Assembly and the community on any backlog in access to specialty clinics and outpatient services, including a breakdown by specialty, and how the government intends to clear the backlog.

### **Noted**

Please refer to the response to recommendation 2.

It would take considerable resources to provide a weekly report on backlog access to speciality clinics and outpatient services including a breakdown by speciality due to the complexity and amount of data that would be required.

#### **Recommendation 4**

The Committee recommends that ACT health, in conjunction with health and disability organisations, provide information for GPs and other health workers about how to prevent infection with in-home workers and the importance of support for disabled people.

#### **Agreed**

ACT Health has provided comprehensive information to the health sector in relation to infection control, including sending regular updates to the sector and providing a range of resources, including webinars. There is also detailed information available for health care professionals at the [ACT Chief Health Officer's Alerts website](#)<sup>5</sup>.

There is also detailed information for disability and community support workers provided on the [ACT Health non-government community, disability and health service providers website](#)<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Recommendation 5**

The Committee recommends that any further directions issued by the ACT Government be clearer about what aspects of a venue fall within the floor space that determines how many patrons can be in a space in a venue.

#### **Agreed in principle**

The current directions and associated guidance provided on the covid19.act.gov.au website provide clear and specific advice for the hospitality sector on how to ensure compliance with the public health directions. The Government will continue to work with businesses to ensure advice is as accessible as possible.

#### **Recommendation 6**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider whether guidelines for venues are better contained within directions/determinations rather than existing separately.

#### **Noted**

The Chief Health Officer has considered this recommendation and determined that including this level of detail would make the public health directions significantly more cumbersome and restrictive for businesses. Public health directions are drafted very

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.health.act.gov.au/health-professionals/chief-health-officer-alerts>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://health.act.gov.au/businesses/non-government-community-disability-and-health-service-providers>

carefully and in a way which provides some level of flexibility for businesses to manage the risk, while still being prescriptive enough to protect the safety of the community.

Directions related to non-essential businesses require the development of a COVID-19 Safety Plan, and that this be developed with regard to published guidance material endorsed by the Chief Health Officer. These directions also include an attached page of risk mitigation guidance, which has been regularly updated in response to feedback from stakeholders. The attachment notes that:

*This Direction should be read in conjunction with the guidance material prepared by the Chief Health Officer, including guidance material about how to prepare a COVID-19 Safety Plan, which is available at [www.covid19.act.gov.au](http://www.covid19.act.gov.au).*

The ACT Government has provided guidance on the [covid19.act.gov.au](http://covid19.act.gov.au) website under the business hub and has been working with businesses by taking an educative approach to compliance with directions.

#### **Recommendation 7**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish the AHPPC advice that states that gaming venues should not open until stage 3.

#### **Agreed in part**

The 3 step framework for a COVIDSafe Australia approved by National Cabinet provided clear advice that gaming venues should not open until Stage 3.<sup>7</sup> The 3-step framework is based on advice from the AHPPC.

It would not be appropriate for the ACT to release AHPPC guidance that informs National Cabinet discussions. This is a matter for the Commonwealth to determine whether advice can be publicly released.

#### **Recommendation 8**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide some concession, such as rent relief for ACT Government premises, to the organisers of Live in Ya Lounge.

#### **Agreed**

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.pm.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/three-step-framework-covidsafe-australia.pdf>.

Live in Ya Lounge, as produced by Events AV Services (EAVS) has had concessional venue hire arrangements in place with no fees for 2-17 May and 55% venue hire fees from 18 May 2020.

From 24 July this event has operated as a commercial event with all ticketing revenue going to the promoter.

#### **Recommendation 9**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government create a library of arts equipment for use by the arts sector.

#### **Noted**

Loaning of equipment will be undertaken on a case by case basis when suitable.

ACT Government funded arts organisations provide opportunities for the community to access equipment within ACT Government arts facilities for a range of art forms.

#### **Recommendation 10**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government create guidelines for managers and staff regarding working from home arrangements and transitional arrangements for return to office-based work.

#### **Agreed**

The Government acknowledges its responsibility under work safety law to periodically review and refine its work safety arrangements. Given the ongoing changes to service delivery necessitated by the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government has prepared a suite of COVID-19 safety policies and guidelines, in close consultation with workers, unions and safety experts. These include:

- guidance for managers and staff about how to ensure that people who work from home may do so safely; and
- a whole of government policy and guide designed to ensure that any changes to work arrangements initiated in response to changes in health restrictions are planned and executed safely.

Additional measures, including a physiotherapy treatment service for ACTPS staff experiencing musculo-skeletal symptoms while working from home, have been implemented to complement work safety policy.

### **Recommendation 11**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make it a priority to publish an action plan to support the ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy, as required by that strategy, and that that plan include:

- specific information for people with disabilities, families, carers and support workers so that people with disabilities can participate in society in accordance with social distancing rules;
- clear information to people with a disability and their carers about what the process is to access and acquire PPE;
- provision for an ACT COVID-19 Disability Hotline; and
- a way to operationalize the Territory role in the Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability.

### **Agreed in part**

An action plan for the Community Services Directorate (CSD) led COVID-19 Disability Strategy will be prioritised for release.

In addition, the ACT Health Directorate is developing a COVID-19 operational plan (the Plan) for people with disability in close consultation with key stakeholders in the community and across Government. The ACT Health Directorate is looking to finalise this as a priority following the incorporation of stakeholders' feedback.

The Plan will:

- outline the ACT Government's response to the Australian Government Department of Health's Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability - Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Coronavirus; and
- include actions the ACT Government is taking to provide information and guidance to engage health professionals and health care workers about the rights of people to equitable access to health care in appropriate settings.

Specific information and advice for people with disability has been made publicly available so that people with disability, their families, carers and supporters can make an informed decision on how and when people with disability can participate in the Canberra community in accordance with social distancing rules. This content was released on 15 May 2020 and is located on the CSD website.

Public information on how people with disability can access PPE through ACT Government channels has been made available through the CSD website and public communication

through a range of targeted actions including the INVOLVED newsletter and social media. Messaging can be enhanced on this matter.

There are existing central phonedlines for support. The ACT Government has established a dedicated COVID-19 helpline operating between 8am and 8pm daily. The ACT helpline has the capacity to provide support for vulnerable and isolated people in our community, which includes people with disability and their families. The Commonwealth Department of Health has also established a free National Disability Helpline providing information and referrals for people with disability, their families, carers and support workers who need assistance because of COVID-19. The Commonwealth has also established for a 6-week trial a COVID-19 Health Professionals Disability (Telephone) Advisory Service.

### **Recommendation 12**

The Committee recommends that the ACT government establish a small fund to be administered by CarersACT to provide effective respite for carers aimed at rebuilding their capacity following this extended period of stress.

### **Noted**

The ACT Government is working with disability peaks and organisations to reduce pressure on living arrangements for people with disability through the provision of respite type care in the second phase of the implementation of the COVID-19 Disability Strategy. The methodology for dissemination of supports is yet to be finalised.

### **Recommendation 13**

The Committee recommends that the ACT government make representations to the Commonwealth supporting the conversion of NDIS advance payments for COVID-19 related expenses into a grant.

### **Agreed in principle**

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Department of Social Services have provided regular COVID-19 related updates to the community and through the Disability Reform Council (DRC) on COVID-19 related supports, services and advice. All DRC meeting communiqués are publicly available on the Commonwealth Department of Social Services website<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/programmes-services/government-international/disability-reform-council](http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/programmes-services/government-international/disability-reform-council)

The ACT Government welcomed the announcement by the Hon Stuart Robert MP on 21 March 2020 outlining new supports for people with disability, providers and workers during the COVID-19 health emergency, including the NDIS advance payments for COVID-19 related expenses. Additionally, Minister Robert announced that some supports would receive an additional 10 per cent COVID-19 loading and a more generous cancellation pricing.

Whilst the ongoing management and administration of NDIS advance payments for COVID-19 related expenses remains the responsibility of the NDIA, the ACT Government has raised (and will continue to raise) this matter regularly at DRC meetings in order to ensure appropriate supports and services are in place for people with disability, providers and workers during the COVID-19 health emergency.

#### **Recommendation 14**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government revise its clinical guidelines in order to reassure people with a disability that they will continue to have access to health care, including emergency and critical health care, on the basis of equality with others and based on objective and non-discriminatory clinical criteria.

#### **Agreed**

The Clinical Health Emergency Coordination Centre has established a Steering Group, with representatives from the ACT Human Rights Commission and ACT Government Disability Reference Group, to oversee the development of the Global COVID-19 Pandemic Triage Process for Intensive Care Resources underpinned by the Guiding Principles for the ACT Framework for Ethical Decision Making during the Global COVID-19 Pandemic.

A number of disability groups (National Disability Service, ACT Council of Social Service, ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advisory Service, Advocacy for Inclusion, Women with Disabilities ACT, ACT Down Syndrome Association) and other community groups (Health Care Consumers Association, Human Rights Commission, Winnunga Nimmityjah, A Gender Agenda, Carers ACT), have been consulted throughout the development of the Principles for the Ethical Framework for Decision Making and the Triage Process.

The triage process will ensure that people with disabilities will have access to health care, including emergency and critical health care, on the basis of equality with others and objective and non-discriminatory clinical criteria.

### **Recommendation 15**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that any ethical decision-making framework is designed with close consultation and active involvement of people with a disability and their representative organisations.

#### **Agreed**

Refer to response to recommendation 14.

### **Recommendation 16**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider and act on the recommendations in the letter from Legal Aid appended to this report.

#### **Agreed in principle**

The ACT Government welcomes the Committee's recommendation and the proposals outlined in the Legal Aid letter.

The ACT Government is committed to modernising residential tenancy law to ensure that tenancy laws align with community expectations.

This year the Government has passed the *Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2020* and also has a second bill, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2020, currently before the Legislative Assembly.

In addition, the Government has introduced several residential tenancy measures specifically in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures include, but are not limited to, implementing a moratorium on evictions for COVID-19 impacted tenants, providing financial incentives for landlords who agree to rent reductions and funding the Conflict Resolution Service to provide free mediation services to impacted tenants. In implementing these measures, the ACT Government has maintained a balance between the interests, rights and obligations of tenants and landlords.

The ACT Government notes that it has already addressed, in some form, a number of the proposals in the Legal Aid letter (3-8) through the above-mentioned reforms. This includes introducing an additional measure to allow a COVID-19 impacted household to terminate a fixed-term tenancy agreement early and without penalty, clarifying the legal rights of landlords and co-tenants, expanding ACAT's powers to resolve disputes between co-tenants and facilitating a co-tenant leaving a tenancy and joining a new co-tenant to an existing residential tenancy agreement. The Government is also actively considering additional support for COVID-19 impacted tenants at the end of the eviction moratorium period.

The Government has requested that the Justice and Community Safety Directorate monitor developments with the COVID-19 pandemic and tenancy matters, and brief the Government as necessary, on additional measures such as those proposed by the Legal Aid ACT letter.

### **Recommendation 17**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to lower and/or remove stamp duty where possible as a lever to encourage housing sales.

#### **Agreed**

As part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has significantly reduced stamp duty for eligible owner-occupier home buyers until 30 June 2021. This will save new home buyers thousands of dollars, generate more work for the local construction industry and create more jobs.

The following concessions apply to contracts exchanged between 4 June 2020 and 30 June 2021:

- No stamp duty on single residential dwelling blocks
- No stamp duty on off-the-plan unit (unit-titled apartment and townhouses) purchases up to \$500,000
- An \$11,400 stamp duty reduction for off-the-plan unit (unit-titled apartment and townhouses) purchases between \$500,000 and \$750,000

The Government will continue to reduce stamp duty every year under its tax reform.

### **Recommendation 18**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to review how to make the DA process more efficient, without compromising planning outcomes.

#### **Agreed**

The ACT Planning and Land Authority regularly reviews its processes and procedures to ensure that development applications (DAs) are assessed in the most efficient way. The authority has seen a significant improvement in DA processing times in the last 12 months, with the most recent monthly results for June 2020 showing that 82 per cent of applications were decided within the statutory timeframe.

The ACT Planning and Land Authority is continuing to work with referral entities, such as other ACT Government agencies and utility providers, to streamline the DA referral process

and the way in which comments are received and considered to ensure the process is efficient and effective.

#### **Recommendation 19**

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Planning and Land Management publish the number of lease variations issued in 2019-20 broken down by month and the value of revenue and waivers for these variations.

#### **Agreed**

The ACT Planning and Land Authority will publish these figures on its website once the information has been collated.

#### **Recommendation 20**

The Committee recommends that the Suburban Land Agency publish a list of all available residential blocks that would be suitable for purchase under the HomeBuilder program.

#### **Noted**

A list of single residential blocks available for sale by the Suburban Land Agency (SLA) is published on the SLA's website. Whether a block would be suitable under the HomeBuilder program depends on the purchaser's housing preferences, as well as the size, orientation and typology of the block.

#### **Recommendation 21**

The Committee recommends that, given that the ACT Budget was delayed and there has not been a financial update since the March Quarter 2020 Consolidated Financial Report, the ACT Government publish the actual financial reports or estimated outcomes for the 2019-20 year in July.

#### **Noted**

The next consolidated set of financial statements as part of the June Quarter Consolidated Financial Report (2019-20 Interim Result) will be available by no later than 29 August 2020 in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1996*.

The Government has also indicated that it will provide an update to the budget position in late August 2020.